

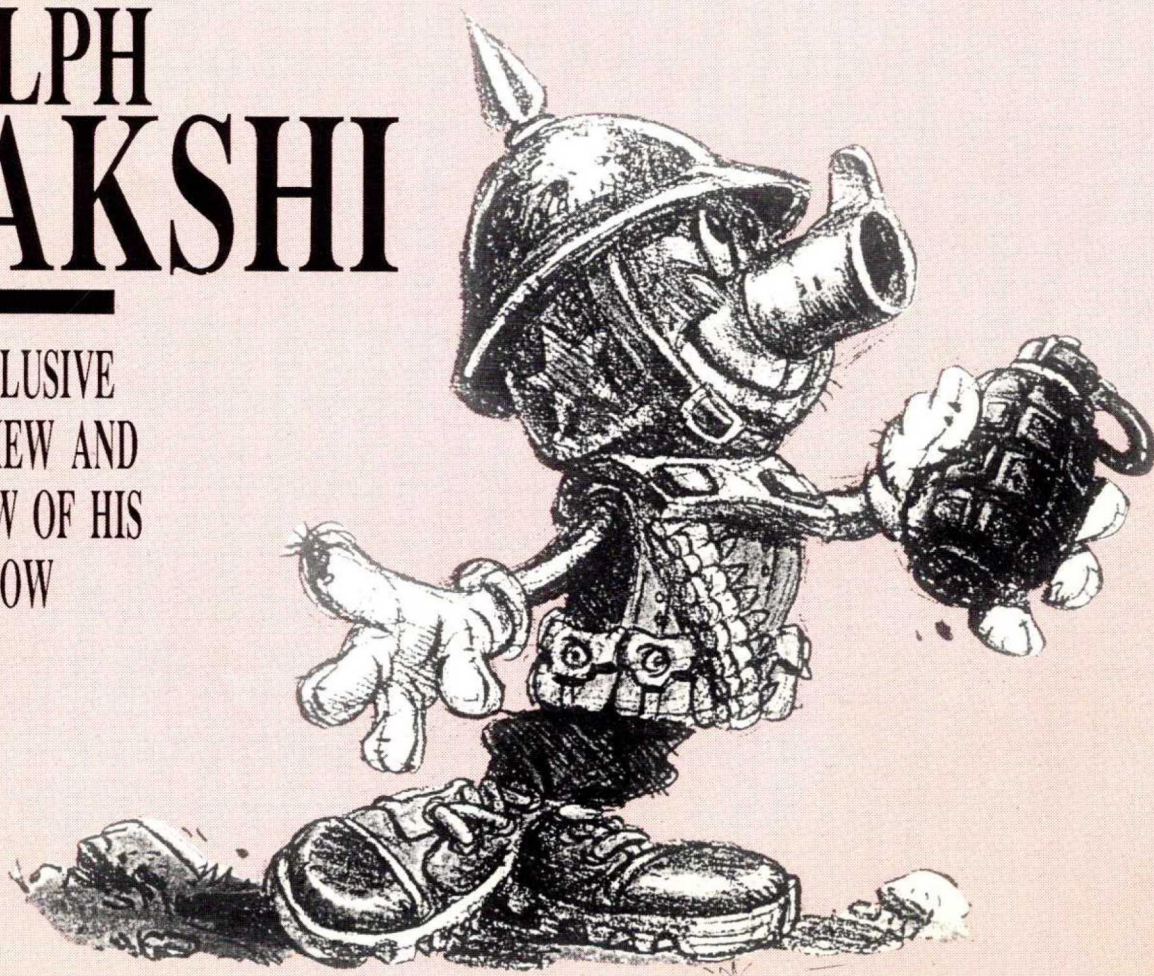
NUMBER SEVENTEEN TWO DOLLARS

ANIMATO!

THE ANIMATION FAN'S MAGAZINE

RALPH BAKSHI

AN EXCLUSIVE
INTERVIEW AND
PREVIEW OF HIS
NEW SHOW



Who Framed
ROGER RABBIT

CHINESE ANIMATION

JACK HANNAH

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What better way to fill the time between new issues of *Animato* than by reading our classic back issues? We've been publishing the magazine for five years, and our past issues offer a wealth of coverage of 80s animation, historical articles, informative reviews, and other great features.

Issues #1-#6 are sold out, and both #11 and #13 have just gone out of print, but the following issues are still available, at \$2.50 each, or any five for \$10.00 - you save \$2.50. Many of the remaining issues are in short supply, so get 'em while they last. Here's a look at some of the highlights of these jam-packed digest magazines (each issue contains other features):

#7: Disney's *The Black Cauldron* is cover-featured, with a look at its making and a review; G. Michael Dobbs interviews animation's elder statesman, Grim Natwick; Matt Hasson on Richard Williams's much-delayed, frequently-retitled, still-upcoming feature; and Jim Korkis on the Walter Lantz studio.

#8: We celebrate Porky Pig's fiftieth birthday with Matthew Hasson's look at his long film career; Jim Korkis on Bob Clampett; Tim Fay on Japan's cult series *Urusei Yatsura*; plus Saturday Mourning '85, and G. Michael Dobbs on collecting Fleischer videotapes.

#9: Will Vinton's *Mark Twain* is our cover boy, with Harry McCracken's overview of Vinton's career inside; G. Michael Dobbs interviews Shamus Culhane; children's TV expert George W. Woolery on the history of TV animation; plus Korkis on Chuck Jones and featured reviews of *Starchaser* and the *19th Tournee of Animation*.

#10: Dave Bennett's cover announces a special book review section, with pieces on Leonard Mosley's *Disney's World*,

Shamus Culhane's *Talking Animals and Other People*, and Joe Adamson's *The Walter Lantz Story*; Steve Segal begins his first-hand account of the making of *The Brave Little Toaster*; and Mark Marderosian on *Goliath II*.

#12: Timothy Fay presides over Saturday Mourning '86; Harry McCracken on *An American Tail* with and Don Bluth's work; Mike Dobbs on Max Fleischer's live-action work; Jim Korkis's *Harlequin* and David Bastian's *Flipbooks* columns debut; all topped off by a Dave Bennett cover.

14: We mark the year of *Snow White* with Mike Ventrella's review of the film; Gary Meyer on Norman McLaren; TV's *Ewoks* and *Droids*; plus Shamus Culhane and a look at the future of computer animation.

#15: Harry McCracken looks at Disney's *DuckTales* in our cover story; David Bastian visits the Los Angeles Animation Celebration; Bob Miller on thirty years of Hanna-Barbera; plus Bastian on Canemaker's Winsor McCay biography and a larger review section.

#16: Our last digest-sized issue is a special *Mighty Mouse: the New Adventures* one, with a John Kricfalusi interview and RoundTable discussion of the show featuring comments by Chuck Jones, Leonard Maltin, and others. Plus McCracken on the Museum of Cartoon Art's Fleischer Studios exhibit, and more. Original cover by Kricfalusi.

Subscriptions for future issues are also available, of course: \$10.00 in North America, \$15.00 elsewhere.

Order from:
Animato Back Issues
PO Box 1240,
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A sneak preview of one of the characters from Ralph Bakshi's *Tattertown*. See page 8 for more information on this upcoming show. Illustration copyright (c) Bakshi Productions, Inc. *Roger Rabbit* logo copyright (c) the Walt Disney Company.

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ANIMATORIAL

You learn a lot when you move a magazine from digest size to the new, roomier format that begins with this *Animato*. It takes more time to put together a bigger magazine, which is why this issue is late. (Sorry about that; the next issue should come around sooner than this one did.) It also takes more stuff to fill it. This *Animato* contains nearly twice as much material as any previous issue.

A few random notes. In last issue's interview with John Kricfalusi, he told us that he'd probably be leaving the Bakshi studios and *Mighty Mouse: the New Adventures* for other projects. As you probably know by

now, he did (along with several other *Mighty Mouse* artists), and his new project is the revival of Bob Clampett's *Beany and Cecil* that is part of the new ABC Saturday-morning lineup. *Mighty Mouse* continues too, on CBS. We have features on both shows in this issue.

As I write this, the first issue of a new animation magazine, *Cartoon Quarterly* has just been released. The publisher is Gladstone, the people who produce the Disney comic books, and the editors are Jim Korkis and John Cawley, whom *Animato* readers should need no introduction to. It's an excellent, full-color magazine, which you should have no trouble finding at

your local newstand.

We rarely tell you what's going to be in the next issue of *Animato*, mainly because we usually don't know ourselves very far in advance. (Publishing an animation magazine is such a devil-may-care business.) We can tell you, though, that we have on hand a chat with Friz Freleng by Jerry Beck, which may be the first Freleng interview ever published in an animation magazine. (We can't think of another one, anyway.) That, and all of our regular features, will be in *Animato* #18, along with some surprises. See you then.

Harry McCracken

FAN MAIL FROM SOME FLOUNDER

WRITE TO ANIMATO AT PO BOX 1240, CAMBRIDGE, MA 02238

Dear *Animato*:

-Issue #16 was very good, especially the material on *Mighty Mouse: the New Adventures*. That show is my favorite TV animation in years, and it's great to have the interesting pictures and information on the show that you printed. I hope you'll be covering other animated projects in such detail in the future.

David Hoyt
Valencia, CA

Dear *Animato*:

I am a Japanimation fan, and issue #16 of *Animato* is the first time I've seen that article on *Lum* listed as being in issue #8. (Hmmm...Wonder if there are any other "hidden" Japanimation articles among your back issues? I only have #13-#16.)

Animato apparently is a journal of American/European animation. That's a

shame, because Japan has become extremely important, not only in quantity, but also in quality of output. But see how animation magazines segregate themselves into "All Japanese" (*Anime Journal*, *Animag*) and "All European/American" (*Animato*, *Animator*) categories. Only *Anime-Zine* is talking about covering both subject areas.

By ignoring Japanimation, you're shutting yourself off from a lot of potential readers. Just yesterday, I saw three copies of *Animato* #16 being eagerly scanned by Japanimation fans, only to be put back on the shelf when the fans realized that *Animato* was one of "those" publications. How many other times, I wonder, does this happen?

Think about it...please?

Gary A. Weir
Indianapolis, IN

(We certainly didn't mean to give anybody the impression that *Animato* is a magazine restricted to coverage of American and European animation. We take a little pride, indeed, in the fact that we don't restrict ourselves to one country's output...or one era of animation, or one style.

In this issue, for instance, you'll find information about several current and upcoming American TV series and theatrical films, a history of Chinese animation, looks back at the works of two different American studios of the 1940s, and reviews of books on independent and British animation. (Among other features.)

The only reason we haven't run anything on Japanese animation lately is because nobody's submitted anything on the topic. That's a hint to any experts on the topic who are reading this.)

PRAXINOSCOPE

The World of Animation

INTRODUCING PRAXINOSCOPE

Emile Reynaud invented his praxinoscope in the 1870s; a primitive projector that flashed a succession of brief images on a screen to create an animated picture, it was one of the earliest inventions in the history of animated film. Not to belabor the comparison, but our Praxinoscope, beginning this issue, is a roundup of brief articles, news items, illustrations, and other bits and pieces that will appear in the early pages of *Animato*.

Like the rest of our pages, this feature is open to your contributions. We invite submissions of short articles, commentary, press releases, and illustrations. We can't print everything we receive, but we'll read and consider it all. Send your submissions to:

Praxinoscope
Animato
PO Box 1240
Cambridge, MA 02238

KINNEY SPEAKS!



Animation fans will get a new perspective on the golden age of Disney animation in December, when Harmony Books publishes *Walt Disney and Assorted Other Characters*, by Jack Kinney.

Kinney, best known for his direction of the Goofy "how-to" shorts in the 1940s, worked at the Disney studio from 1931 to 1957. His book, subtitled "An Unauthorized Account of the Early Years at Disney's," is full of behind-the-scenes stories about the making of the great Disney shorts and features. There are many anecdotes about the incredible practical jokes played at the studio, as well as more serious material about the Disney approach to animation. Along the way, Kinney tells us about many names familiar to Disney fans, including Roy Williams, Fred Moore, Wilfred Jackson, and, of course, Walt Disney himself.

The book is profusely illustrated with Kinney drawings interpreting the anecdotes. (Above: a Jack Kinney caricature of Walt Disney from *Walt Disney and Assorted Other Characters*. Copyright (c) Jack Kinney.)

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FALL '88..**

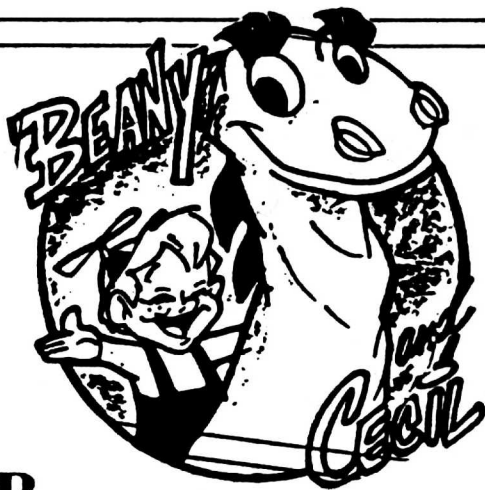


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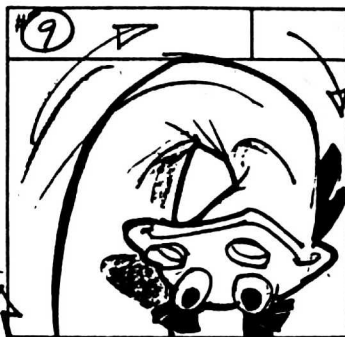
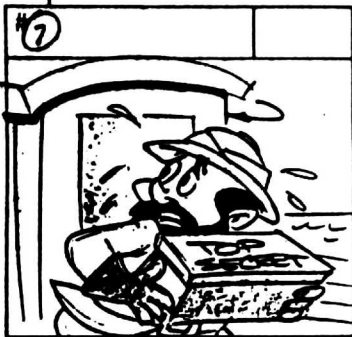
**BEAUTY
AND
THE BEAST**

SNAGGLE PUSS
(HEAVENS TO MEGATRON!) © HANNA-BARBRA INC.

Cartoon by Tom Linehan



Bob Clampett's classic characters Beany and Cecil return to television this Fall in a new series of cartoons for ABC's Saturday-morning schedule produced by former *Mighty Mouse: the New Adventures* supervising director John Kricfalusi (see *Animato* #16) at DIC. Here's some behind-the-scenes artwork from the show. (Artwork copyright (c) Bob Clampett Productions.)



These character studies of Cecil are by Animato contributor Bob Miller, a layout artist on the show.



WHAT'S UPCOMING, DOC?



The bookshelves of Warner Bros. cartoon fans will be getting heavier in upcoming months, thanks to no less than four new books on the studio's work.

The first one, out now, is Mel Blanc's autobiography, *That's Not All Folks!* (Warner Books; \$17.95). It's reviewed on page 36 of this issue.

Blanc's book should not be confused with the similarly-titled *That's All Folks!*, just published by Henry Holt. That book is an *Art of Walt Disney*-style art book by Warner expert Steve Schneider. (The above illustration, an animation drawing by Virgil Ross, is from that book.)

In the Spring of 1989, Holt will publish *Looney Tunes and Merrie Melodies*. That's a new title for the second edition of a classic book: Jerry Beck and Will Friedwald's *The Warner Bros. Cartoons*. The new edition will be heavily revised and updated, as well as profusely illustrated for the first time.

The fourth Warner Bros. book in our future is by none other than Chuck Jones himself. Norton will publish his autobiography; title and release date unknown.

(Illustrations on this page: Bugs Bunny copyright (c) Warner Communications, Inc. Popeye copyright (c) King Features.)

ARF! ARF! ARF!



AN INTERVIEW WITH JERRY LOBOZZO, KING FEATURES' NEW OFFICIAL POPEYE VOICE

How did your interest in Popeye begin?

Every day when I came home from school, about 2:30-3:00, I would sit in front of the TV with a bowl of cereal, which usually ruined my dinner, and watch the sailor man in action. That was one of the only cartoons I watched. I watched *Quick Draw McGraw*, but Popeye was my favorite.

How did you discover you could do Popeye's voice?

Right about the time I was watching him...I don't know why...just like somebody does well in painting. It's something I picked up as a kid. I'd sit in front of the TV and mimic what Popeye was saying. I used to mimic everyone, my sisters, brothers, friends...sometimes doing it unconsciously. When I first started doing Popeye, I sounded like one of his nephews..."Uncle Popeye, Uncle Popeye." But as time went by and puberty broke, I was able to do the old sailor man!

How did you get involved with doing Popeye professionally?

When I found out that Jack Mercer had died, I decided I wanted to be the one to take over. Naturally, I was upset at his passing, but I thought, "Gee...who's gonna do the voice?"

A little time went by, and I noticed a new fad coming up on radio: novelty rap records. I came up with the idea to do an album called "Popeye the Ladies' Man." I wheeled and dealt and got the album together. I had to go to King Features Syndicate to get their approval of the project. I left a tape with them, not knowing what to expect as my concept was on an adult level, and Popeye appeals to children.

They heard the tape and loved it, and since they didn't have a Popeye voice, they asked if they could recommend me. I had such a positive attitude about

doing it that it came my way! I've done the voice for Timberland shoes, an inhouse industrial project, several Cocoa Puffs commercials, and a Popeye talking doll. If a new series of Popeye cartoons occurs, I'd like to do the voice for that.

One thing I've done which I'm very proud of was a trip last May to visit a little girl by the name of Kim Dubourg. She has cerebral palsy, and was scheduled to go into surgery. Before she did, at the request of Kim's cousins, I spoke to her over the phone as Popeye, who was her favorite cartoon character. She thought it was her grandfather, but I told her as Popeye, "Expect a little gift from me in a few minutes." I had sent Kim a tape with a special message, which arrived a few minutes after my phone call.

Well, she played the tape and it knocked her out. She was so happy! She played it for the doctors and the nurses, and as she was wheeled down to the operating room she said to her parents, "Don't worry mommy and daddy, I'm gonna be strong and tough like Popeye." I later visited her, and brought her lots of Popeye material which King Features supplied. Since then, I've kept in touch with her, and will be invited to her party when she learns to walk.

Kim realizes that there is a "voice" behind Popeye, but as far as she's concerned, I'm it! It just goes to show what a strength figure Popeye was to this little girl, and that can easily be multiplied by hundreds and thousands of little boys and girls and adults that can use Popeye as a strength figure! I personally think Popeye is a much better strength figure than these newer cartoon characters in the market today. I couldn't think of a better cartoon character for me to represent.

Interview by Fred Grandinetti



DISNEY'S GUMMI BEARS: STILL NUMBER ONE!

By Bob Miller

Usually, "quality" and "Saturday morning cartoons" are incompatible terms, but not when applied to *Disney's Adventures of the Gummi Bears*. Now in its fourth season, this delightful series continues to entertain with its vivid characters, fluid animation, and stories that don't pander to the bubblegum brigade.

Before I watched the show, I had considered the Gummi Bears to be Smurfs in bear suits. Not so! I was surprised to find out that while their personalities were distinctive, they became even more dimensional as the series progressed. Character development in a cartoon? Yes! Surely a rarity for Saturday morning, wouldn't you say? By the third season, Zummi Gummi has *twice* conquered his fear of heights; Gruffi's harsh exterior has exposed a heart of margarine; and slow-thinking Tummi has developed a talent for building boats, from models to full scale. The addition of Gusto Gummi - who's as wild and crazy as his artwork - has brought some zaniness to the proceedings.

Princess Calla's role has expanded, with stories that test her leadership



ability and her friendship with Sunni Gummi. Yes, in *Gummi Bears*, princesses aren't for window dressing any more!

In the humor department, the show is like *Bullwinkle* in that its jokes appeal to children and adults alike. In "Close Encounters of the Gummi Kind," Gusto says Ogres make terrible pets and makes a stink gesture with his hand (I suspect the line was originally "terrible mess," and NBC's Broadcast Standards had it changed and the dialogue relooped). Thankfully, *Gummi Bears* is one of those rare shows that doesn't condescend

to its audience.

The animation has improved in the third season, being more fluid, with character designs more consistent than in past episodes. Overall, the animation remains superior to any other made-for-Saturday-morning show (with the possible exception of *Wuzzles*). It's even better than that of *DuckTales*.

The music is also superior. Thomas Chase and Steve Rucker's score greatly enhances the medieval flavor of the show, having the same romantic qualities as John Williams's *Star Wars* music. And, unlike other TV cartoons, *Gummi Bears* uses a 36-piece orchestra! This music is worthy of a record, but alas, such a release is not likely.

It's not often that a show like *Gummi Bears* brings magic to Saturday morning. By all means, let's support it! If you like the show, write to NBC-TV, Children's Programming, 3000 West Alameda Ave., Burbank, CA 91523. If we can encourage this kind of programming, Saturday morning television can truly be special.

(Illustration copyright (c) the Walt Disney Company.)

BAKSHI TO THE



Ralph Bakshi's career has

traveled from *Mighty Mouse* cartoons to *Mighty Mouse* cartoons by way of an extraordinarily improbable route. After serving as an animator and director at Terrytoons and production head at Famous Studios, Bakshi created a quartet of decidedly adult animated features in the early 1970s - *Fritz the Cat*, *Heavy Traffic*, *Coonskin*, and *Hey Good Lookin'* - which today are influencing, entertaining, educating, and (sometimes) appalling a new generation of animation fans. (This despite *Coonskin* and *Good Lookin'* having barely received release.) The later Bakshi features - *Wizards*, *Lord of the Rings*, *American Pop*, and *Fire and Ice* - have their defenders, but many viewers were greatly disappointed by Bakshi's increasingly commercial subject matter, and, particularly, by his increasingly and eventually near-total reliance on rotoscoping. After *Fire and Ice*, Bakshi took an extended sabbatical from the business to focus his attention on his painting; when he returned to animation, it was not merely with a Saturday morning cartoon (!), but with as unrotoscoped, joyously cartoony a SatAM production as might be imagined. (The show was *Mighty Mouse: the New Adventures*, as if you didn't know.) Bakshi's current projects include the second season of *Mighty Mouse*, and a new show, *Tattertown*, for the Nickelodeon cable TV network. (The illustrations accompanying this interview are from preliminary work on that show.) In June, Mike Ventrella spoke to him about a number of topics, including our interview in *Animato* #16 with John Kricfalusi, the Senior Director of last season's *Mighty Mouse* episodes.



FUTURE

Below: 1930s characters including the original Tom and Jerry, Willie Whopper, Flip the Frog, and Piggy, making their return to show business in Tattertown.



Ventrella: *What brought you to television and Mighty Mouse?*

Bakshi: You can't overestimate how important *Fritz the Cat*, *Heavy Traffic*, and *Coonskin* were. It was that freedom that I had found as a young man to understand what could and could not be done in animation, and that allowed *Mighty Mouse* do be done.

I had quit the business about five years ago to paint pictures. I got so tired of what was happening in animation. I was also very tired - physically, mentally, and emotionally - of supporting the industry in the early '70s with two-million and a-million-and-half dollar films. What I was trying to do with that money, which we all know is ridiculous, without pencil tests, virtually without storyboards and without any knowledge of what the guys were doing other than our discussions, was putting together incredibly wonderful films for a price that was unheard of but which eventually burned me out. The criticisms of my movies, whether it's story or content or lack of classical animation, were an outrage to me. I quit

the business because I vowed never to do another animated feature unless I got the money to take care of all the problems in my pictures that I saw before anyone else.

I love animation very much. This may sound outrageous, but I won't make any more features unless I get the money to prove that I can make an animated film as well as anyone else in the world. I'm looking for that 12 or 14 million dollars that I never had that Bluth gets and the Disney guys get. I can't carry the load of a million or two and face the criticisms I get. It hurts me. No one has to tell me about the crudeness of some of the movements in my movies. That's strictly a lack of polish. That's a lack of what I was never given.

You see, when I was growing up, animation was dead. There wasn't the kind of magazine as yours, there wasn't the collectors or interest. I went to Hollywood for ten years before I saw my first Bob Clampett cartoon. My mouth fell open. What I was trying to do was create a new form strictly on a personal level based on who I was and my experience, and that's unheard of in animation. *Traffic* and *Coonskin*, for instance, don't lean on Clampett or

Avery or Jones or Disney. They lean on Ralph Bakshi. One of the things we're getting a lot of today is very slick imitators. You know, guys who look at Clampett and Avery and say "Hey, I'd like to do that."

What do you think of Who Framed Roger Rabbit? Another copy?

Yeah, basically, but I hope *Rabbit* goes through the roof because it will help me get the money that I need for my animated features. But if you think of walking out of *Pinocchio* or *Snow White* in its day, you can think of the awe you must have felt, because I've felt it years later. But you walk out of *Rabbit* not in awe. The rabbit himself has no personality, and with fifty million dollars in their hands, I thought that was insane.

It's an example of an old style.

Right. But in reacting to John Kricfalusi's remarks about my earlier films [*in Animato #16*]. . . Well, my earlier films, without any pencil tests, with only a million dollars, paved the way for *Roger Rabbit* and certainly paved the way for *Mighty Mouse*.

Were you upset with John Kricfalusi's interview?

Let me not use the word "upset." But I think it's important to discuss this whole thing because John's done this before and I've just let it slide. Creatively speaking, I'll never *not* be involved. As far as having all the answers, I certainly don't.

I dropped back to a producer's role [*in Mighty Mouse*] with all the knowledge and experience that I have gained. My job, as any producer's job, is to take all the knowledge I have, pointing to young new talent, like John, Bob Jacques, and Kent Butterworth, and standing behind them not only in fights with CBS but also creatively at meetings. When I heard a good idea, I went with it. When I did not understand an idea, I said "I don't get it, let's discuss it."

The bottom line on what *Mighty Mouse* is was Ralph Bakshi the Producer finding young talent and letting them express themselves for the first time under his control. What John failed to mention was the fact that John did not time his own films. Kent

Illustrations from Tattertown; copyright (c) Bakshi Productions, Inc.

Butterworth timed his own films as did Bob Jacques. You can imagine the fear I felt, running on these low budgets, letting these guys go, but knowing that they were good and should be heard, and knowing that they wanted to do something different. I was there every day, seven days a week, with all of them.

We would have script conferences where ideas would be tossed around freely and then two of the best animation writers in the business, Tom Minton and Jim Reardon, would write the script. Then boards would be produced. These boards went to a director who then worked with the layout department to lay out the animation. When the animation was completed, I found much to my astonishment that John Kricfalusi and another one of the young directors had never timed films before. If you don't time a film, you're not a director. It's all in the timing. So I had to set up a timing division with Kent Butterworth, who timed "Petey Pate" and the Chipmunk film ["*Mighty's Benefit Plan*"], and Bob Jacques, a brilliant timer who is directing a lot of my *Mighty Mouse* cartoons this season, and they timed the films. So what you had were people who supported other people's weaknesses. Then John Sparey, who was with me on all my feature films and is one of the world's great planners, would take all this at the end to make sure that pan moves were done - a lot of these young directors did not know how to do pan moves or trucking shots - and set up a department with John to take everyone's mistakes and screw-ups and hook everything together. Then the work was sent overseas to be animated. Overseas, I

had another brilliant man whose job it was to make sure the animators followed the timing, adhered to the principles of what we wanted, and if we screwed up, he would call me to change things.

So what I'm saying is that there were three or four brilliant young men all supporting myself and John and the other directors to make sure that *Mighty Mouse* worked, and that's why I was shocked at John Kricfalusi's assumption that everything that worked was his and everything that didn't work was probably mine.

What I had done as a producer is shore up everybody's weaknesses knowing that it takes time to become a great animation director. John is *incredibly* talented as a draughtsman...Kent Butterworth, Jim Reardon, Tom Minton, Bob Jacques...a whole range of talent was involved in making *Mighty Mouse*. I'm not taking credit for any of these guys' work. What I'm taking credit for is understanding animation so thoroughly, and understanding that adult animation requires a special handling, and then setting up a system with no money and building a studio from scratch that allowed these guys to work. And they were under horrendous conditions. The financing - paying for the *Mighty Mouse* characters, the percentage to Viacom, the percentage to my agents who made the deal, and the money man who helped set us up to begin with - just took so much off the top, that it's just a miracle that we even reached the screen. If it wasn't for the old footage, I never would have had the money to finish the series. I picked all of Jim Tyer's footage, figuring it should at least be the best of Terrytoons. But as far as I'm con-

cerned, the *Mighty Mouse* cartoons we're doing this season are better than last season's.

I was afraid the show was going to be cancelled after two weeks or so when it first aired.

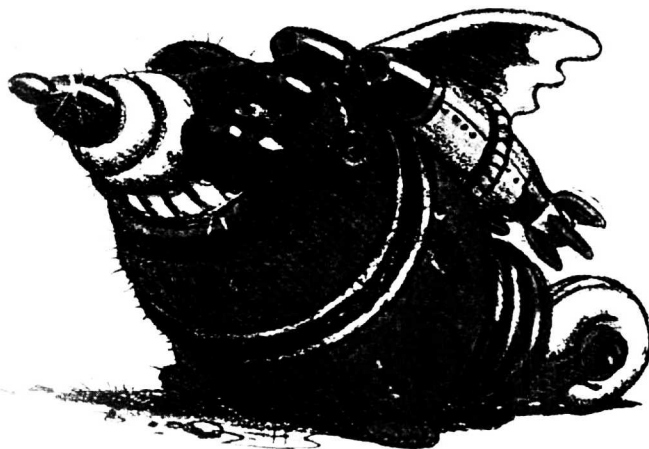
Oh, we came close. It was the reviews that kept us alive. If it weren't for the reviews, we would not be on. CBS did not know what I was going to do the next week and they'd rather have me gone than worry about me and by the way, I didn't know what we were going to do the next week either!

Who do you have this year on your staff?

Well, Kent Butterworth, Mike Kazaleh, and I've directed a few myself.

Any changes in terms of character development in the new season? I've heard that you wanted to get rid of Scrappy.

Scrappy's gone. Starting a series with CBS, I needed softer scripts to get the harder scripts through. On the other hand, when Scrappy worked, as in "Witch Tricks," he was beautiful. There's nothing wrong with sweet animation if it's done right. I'm not an adherent any more at my age of animation being only satiric. Scrappy himself could have been a wonderful character, like in the McDonald's picture ["*The Bagmouse*"] that Kent Butterworth directed, where he was turned into a hamburger. When Scrappy worked, he was fine, but my push is to bring adult animation to television. So Scrappy's gone because



he never made it for me.

Is he just missing, or is there an explanation?

Well, we killed him. We accuse Mighty Mouse of murdering him and there's a whole trial. We keep referring back to certain points where Scrappy did something and Mighty Mouse got pissed off and in the end Scrappy comes back as a monster. . . What's that thing called? The Heap! He comes back as the Heap and he wrestles Mighty Mouse. Then Scrappy wakes up and says "Thank God it was just a dream" and he takes off the covers and he's got the body of a crab.

And we bring back Oil Can Harry, who's let out of jail on good behavior because they figure he's through with his Pearl fixation. Meanwhile, in the last fifty years in jail, he's been carving soap statues of her. So they give him a job for rehabilitation on Pearl's assembly line.

And we marry Mike Mouse to Pearl and we do a whole *Honeymooners* scene. I got a guy who can imitate Ralph Kramden, and Mike is Kramden and The Cow plays Art Carney.

We did an anti right-wing cartoon called "Day of the Mice," which I directed, about mice taking over cats. It's about fear, and it's very dark and very black, and Petey Pate's in there. He plays Hitler. It's a homage to Tex Avery. Lot of takes and fast reactions



and lots of somber film-noir qualities.

It's going to be a much more consistent show. There won't be the bouncing around. Every half hour will be on the same level. The inconsistency had to be there [during the first season's shows]. We had to build a studio; we had no supplies; we started a series with no staff.

And you're only doing six?

We're only doing six half-hours, but we

have sold another show, something called *Tattertown*, which I've been working on for ten years.

Can you tell us about it?

Tattertown is a strange world. What I wanted to do was make something where old and new animation could clash head on, visually, stylistically, and in attitude. *Tattertown* is where old cartoon characters live side by side with new cartoon characters, and they have a hell of a time relating. The old characters go all the way back to Paul Terry's Farmer Alfalfa.

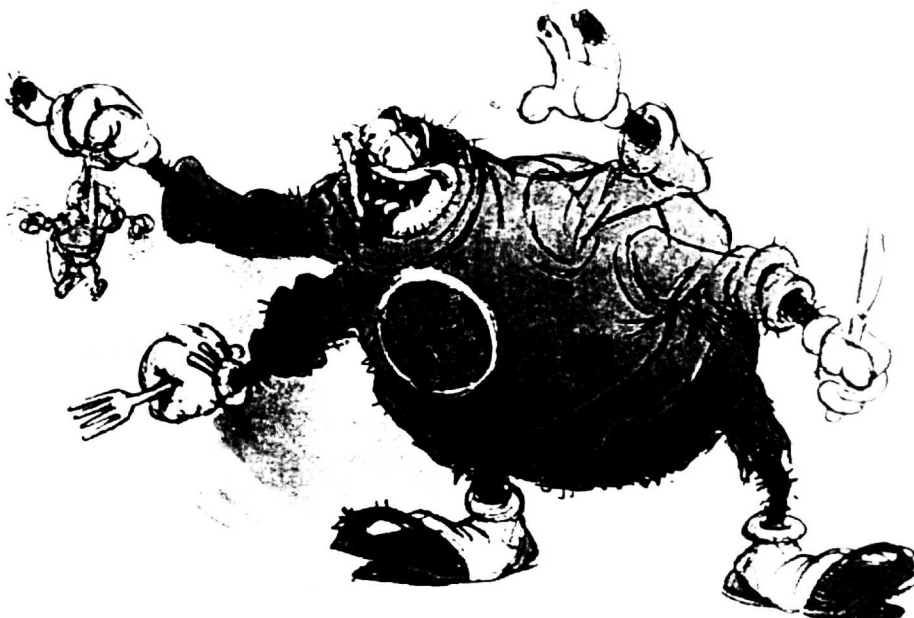
And you're using these characters or just similarities?

Oh, absolutely. Oswald the Rabbit is there and Bosko. And they're right up against characters who are modern and can't move very well and have superior attitudes.

That sounds wonderful for animation fans.

We're trying to move each character in the style he moved in during the period he moved in. This will be on cable. I'm moving away from network because I'm tired of the ratings war.

Speaking of right wing attacks, I understand there has been some controversy recently about Mighty Mouse



snorting the flower [in "The Littlest Tramp"].

All hell broke loose there. Luckily, the newspapers laughed that one away. I thought it was going to be *Coonskin* all over again.

That's one of my favorite films of yours. Why the new video name [Streetfight]?

Everyone's so terrified of the name. I feel a slight pain in me. *Coonskin* was the first Bakshi production; before that I had worked with Steve Krantz. And the first film with my first production company never made it to the screen. Had *Coonskin* made it, you would have seen a different company. *Coonskin* did not make it, and it also cost me *Hey, Good Lookin'*. The film you saw later called *Hey, Good Lookin'* was not the same as what was originally planned. It was the same thing that *Roger Rabbit* did. It was a totally live action film with only four animated characters. *Coonskin* was the deciding picture of my career, and if I never come back and get the kind of budgets I need, it's because *Coonskin* never made it. I don't know how the company ever survived when it had its first two films thrown out, because economically we were moribund.

I think it would have been one of the hippest studios around. I think ani-

mation should attack. I don't think animation should just entertain for the sake of entertainment. I think the kind of films I was trying to get to were films that would take us apart, as a people, as a country, as individuals. That would have fun with what we are.

That's what I think great cartooning should be.

The budget on *Coonskin* was \$1.1 million. But there was such a love of what we were doing among the guys. What's most important in animation is the guys.

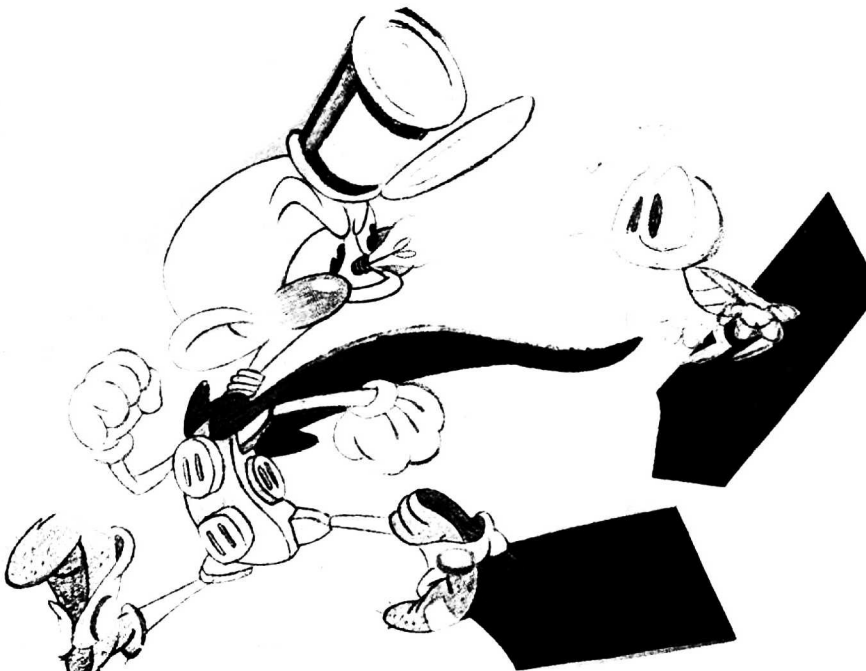
The kind of backbiting and nonsupport that the industry gives itself is amazing to me. We've got to stop that. When someone wrote [in *Animato* #16] that she looked at the first ten minutes of *Mighty Mouse* and walked away bored - this is insanity. Maybe we're very small people in a very small medium, which is why we remain small. But animators have got to stand up for other animators. There's too much backbiting. No one likes Bluth and no one likes Williams and no one likes Bakshi - it's all insane.

Why are there different cuts of Coonskin?

It's out of my control. I have the real version; once I lost the film, I had to give it up.

Are you happy with the video version?

I never looked at it. *Coonskin* is very
(Continued on page 33)



A REVIEW OF WHO FRAMED ROGER RABBIT

RABBIT SEASON

BY HARRY McCracken

Roger Rabbit has been one busy bunny this Summer. He's appeared on the cover of *Newsweek*; he's added a new word ("Toon") to the nation's vocabulary; he's inspired several bushels of toys, clothing, and other merchandise; and he's caused Disneyland and Disney World to hurriedly plan new attractions focused around him.

And oh yes, he's starred in the biggest movie of the year, which is also - arguably, at least - the most successful (partially) animated film since *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs*. Names like Steven Spielberg and Robert Zemeckis certainly attracted audiences to *Who Framed Roger Rabbit* at first, but its unique blend of live-action and cartooning has brought moviegoers of all ages back for repeated viewings. Other animated features have been successful in recent years - notably Spielberg's own *An American Tail* - but *Roger* has attracted teenagers and adults in a way that hasn't happened since Disney animated features did so decades ago. (Whether or not *Roger* is



a Disney production is a matter of semantics: though the movie was released under the Touchstone label Disney uses for adult projects, its popularity has prompted the studio to come out from behind the Touchstone guise to an unprecedented extent recently, extravagantly promoting Roger as the newest Disney superstar.)

Roger may be a Disney star now, but in 1947 Hollywood, he was a supporting player at an apparently second-string animation studio named Maroon Cartoons. One wonders if all the Baby Herman-Roger Rabbit cartoons made by

Illustrations copyright (C) The Walt Disney Company.

CREDIT WHERE CREDIT IS DUE

Animation:

Director of Animation: Richard Williams
Supervising Animators: Andreas Deja, Russell Hall, Phil Nibbelink, Simon Wells

Animators: Tom Sito, Roger Chiasson, David Byers-Brown, Alvaro Gaivoto, Nik Ranieri, Rob Stevenhagen, Alyson Hamilton, James Baxter, Jacques Muller, Joe Haidar, Alan Simpson, Caron Creed, Alain Costa, Raul Garcia, Brigitte Hartley, Greg Manwaring, Colin White, Marc Gordon-Bates, Brent Odell, Mike Swindall, Chuck Gammage, Peter Western, Gary Mudd, Dave Spafford

Additional Animation:

Chief Executive and Supervising

Animator: Dale L. Baer

Animators: Mark Kausler, Matthew O'Callaghan, Dave Pacheco, Bruce W. Smith, Barry Temple, Frans Vischer
Coordinating Animator: Jane M. Baer
Background: Ron Dias, Michael Humphries, Kathleen Swain

Voices:

Roger Rabbit: Charles Fleischer
Jessica Rabbit: Kathleen Turner
Baby Herman: Lou Hirsch
Benny the Cab: Charles Fleischer
Gorilla: Morgan Deare
Betty Boop: Mae Questel
Daffy Duck: Mel Blanc
Donald Duck: Tony Anselmo
Hippo: Mary T. Radford
Yosemite Sam: Joe Alaskey
Smart Ass: David Lander
Greasy: Charles Fleischer
Psycho: Charles Fleischer
Stupid: Fred Newman
Wheezzy: June Foray
Birds: Russi Taylor
Toad: Les Perkins
Droopy: Richard Williams
Lena Hyena: June Foray
Tweety Bird: Mel Blanc
Bugs Bunny: Mel Blanc
Mickey Mouse: Wayne Allwine
Bullet #1: Pat Buttram
Bullet #2: Jim Cummings
Bullet #3: Jim Gallant
Singing Sword: Frank Sinatra
Minnie Mouse: Russi Taylor
Goofy: Tony Pope
Pinocchio: Peter Westy
Sylvester: Mel Blanc
Woody Woodpecker: Cherry Davis
Wolf: Tony Pope
Porky Pig: Mel Blanc

Maroon were as funny as *Somethin's Cookin'*, the eye-popping short that opens *Who Framed Roger Rabbit*. It's been called the funniest cartoon ever made; it isn't, of course, but it is a razor-sharp, very clever pastiche of a 1940s gag cartoon. (With its combination of Warneresque violence and Disney-style lush attention to detail, it probably resembles a Bill Hanna-Joe Barbera Tom and Jerry cartoon as much as anything.)

Somethin's Cookin' is one of the most elaborate cartoons of its kind ever made; in fact, it's its lavishness that gives away its identity as a modern, big-budget production. Roger, for instance, casts an animated reflection on the kitchen's well-scrubbed checkerboard floor, something even Disney characters rarely did. More noticeably, the cartoon features incredibly sophisticated use of the camera, with more shifting perspectives, animated backgrounds, and other tricks than have probably ever been crammed into five minutes of animation before.

These modern techniques don't really detract from the intended effect, which is to pile as much frenetic, breathless gags and action into a short cartoon as conceivably possible. This is something better than a mere imitation of a classic Hollywood cartoon: it's an over-the-top parody that caricatures the excesses of the genre with loving detail.

When the director yells "Cut!," *Roger Rabbit* shifts from being an animated film to a live-action one with animated characters added in. It also becomes an uneven work with a fair number of letdowns among the many highpoints.

When the film disappoints, it's often because of a script - by Jeffrey Price and Peter Seaman - that keeps coming up with ingenious ideas and then not doing as much with them as it might have. Price and Seaman come up with so many neat bits and pieces that this isn't as much of a problem as it might be: the film is never boring for more than a few moments, but it flits about from idea to idea with a very short attention span. (It shares this problem with numerous other Spielberg-produced films.)

The most frustrating example of this is how little the film really does with the "Toon" concept - the conceit that cartoon characters were a race of second-class citizens who found work in the animation business - after the first few brilliant scenes. This is a fabulous idea, and an improvement on Gary Wolf's

novel *Who Censored Roger Rabbit?*, which was about comic strip characters.

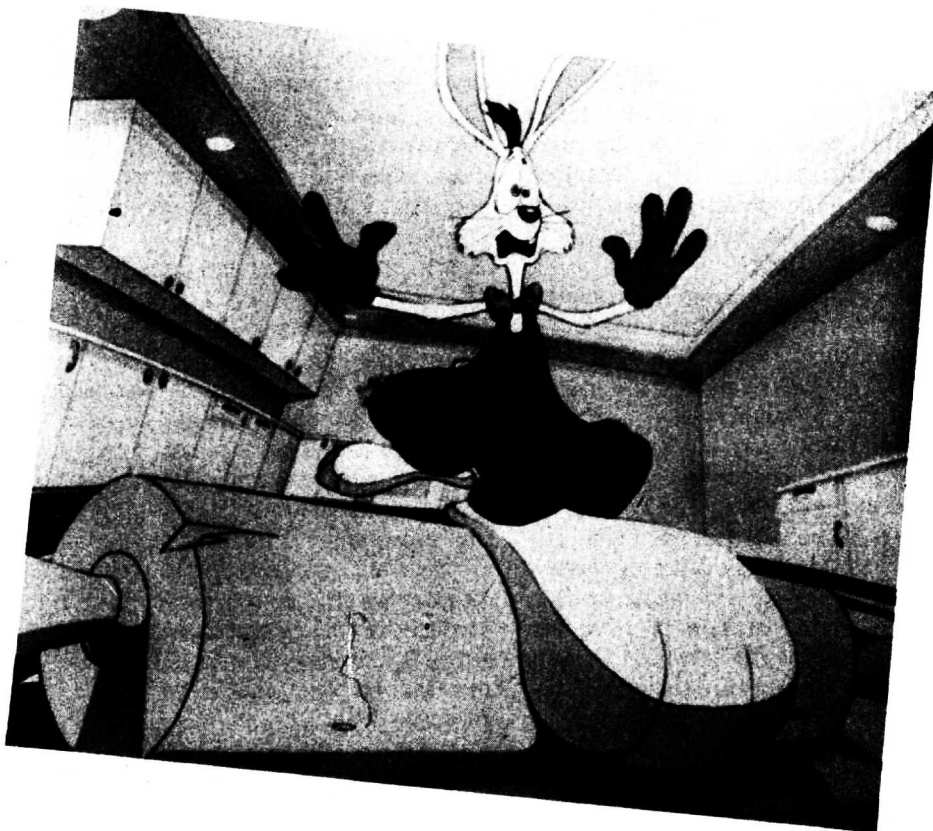
During the first twenty minutes or so, the movie briskly examines a multitude of repercussions of the existence of toons. Baby Herman shows that they, like flesh and blood actors, don't necessarily resemble their on-screen personas in the slightest; Betty Boop's appearance selling cigarettes shows that toons can fall on hard times; and Jessica Rabbit's effect on the live-action audience for her musical number demonstrates one of the more fascinating implications of toon-human relations. (It is also a great piece of virtuoso animation.) The whole Ink and Paint Club sequence, which clearly parallels the Cotton Club's exploitation of great black performers, hints that the story to come will be a sophisticated, even profound, allegory.

But once Marvin Acme (Stubby Kaye, in an all-too-brief role) gets murdered, and Roger gets framed, the story's attentions move in other directions. (Eddie's eventual entry into Toontown offers an opportunity to return to an investigation of Toon culture, but not much is done with it: this area of Los Angeles to which the Toons have been relegated is not a particularly well-defined place. It's the backgrounds, too rich in tantalizing detail to fully appreciate in one viewing, that tell us the most about it.)

The plot, as the title suggests, is a mystery story, but private eye Eddie Valliant (Bob Hoskins) doesn't do much detective work; the clues are conveniently dispensed to him through devices like newspaper photos and newsreels that move the story along in a rather rudimentary way. And when we finally discover who really did frame Roger Rabbit, the explanation manages to be obvious, confusing, and improbable, all at the same time.

That this movie isn't a very mysterious mystery really isn't a serious problem, of course. The real genre this film belongs to is the Spielberg heart-warming adventure-comedy, a genre it shares with most Spielberg productions, from *E.T.* on down to *Harry and the Hendersons*. *Roger Rabbit* is one of the most creative of all such movies, and one of the best, but its heritage is readily apparent throughout.

Fortunately, the animation itself is a lot more consistently excellent than the



story it tells. It is easy to criticize the movie's animation (see below), but the goals the cartooning tries to accomplish are unprecedentedly, perhaps impossibly, demanding ones. Given that, it's difficult to imagine anybody doing a better job than director of animation Richard Williams (and Dale and Jane Baer, who supervised the film's American animation unit) and his artists have done. (The producers considered using a purely-Disney staff, the Don Bluth studio, or a formed-for-the-purpose crew before calling on Williams.)

Richard Williams has been making brilliant TV commercials from his British studio for many years, but his experience with feature-length animation is limited to his disappointing *Raggedy Ann and Andy* of a decade ago and the very personal Persian folktale film he's been working on for more than two decades. Even so, Williams was the ideal choice to bring Toontown's residents to life; he's a chameleon who moves from one style to another with ease, and some of his commercials include technical razzle-dazzle comparable to that of *Roger Rabbit*. One Williams commercial for a British floor covering is a carbon copy

HOW MANY DID YOU SPOT?

Not the least of *Who Framed Roger Rabbit*'s wonders is the astounding number of vintage cartoon characters tempted out of retirement for cameo appearances in it. A quartet of characters who are arguably the four greatest actors in animation history - Mickey Mouse, Donald Duck, Bugs Bunny, and Daffy Duck - are provided the opportunity to give star turns. Three others - Tweety, Betty Boop, and Droopy - each come close to stealing the movie during their performances.

The bulk of the characters, though, make fleeting appearances during several crowd scenes throughout the movie, the two most important of which are the first moments in Toontown and the movie's close. (One character, Felix the Cat, makes an apparently unauthorized appearance as a stone carving above the tunnel to Toontown.) Here's an undoubtedly-far-from-complete list of guest stars, compiled by your eagle-eyed editors:

Bambi
Betty Boop
Big Bad Wolf
Brer Bear
Broomsticks (*Fantasia*)

Bucky Bug
Bunnies (*Tortoise and the Hare*)
Chilly Willy (mentioned)
Clara Cluck
Clarabelle Cow
Daffy Duck
Daisy Duck
Dinky Doodle (mentioned)
Dog from *The Screwy Truant*
Donald Duck
Dopey
Droopy
Dumbo
Elmer Elephant
Elves from an early Silly Symphony
Flowers (*Flowers and Trees*)
Ferdinand
Foghorn Leghorn
Goofy
Goons (*Sleeping Beauty*)
Harp (*Fun and Fancy Free*)
Hippo ballerina (*Fantasia*)
Huey, Dewey, and Louie (mentioned)
Hummingbirds (*Song of the South*)
Jiminy Cricket
Jose Carioca
Koko the Clown
Lampwick (depicted on a poster)
Mae West sparrow (*Who Killed Cock*

Robin?)
Marvin Martian
Mickey Mouse
Minnie Mouse
Mushrooms (*Fantasia*)
Orphans (early Mickey Mouse cartoons)
Ostrich ballerina (*Fantasia*)
Penguins (*Mary Poppins*)
Peter (*Make Mine Music*)
Pinocchio
Pluto
Porky Pig
Reluctant Dragon
Road Runner
Screwly Squirrel (mentioned)
Sheepdog (Chuck Jones's)
Speedy Gonzales
Sylvester
Thumper (mentioned)
Tinkerbell
Toby Tortoise
Trees (*Flowers and Trees*)
Tweedle Dee
Tweedle Dum
Tweety
Wiffle Piffle
Wile E. Coyote
Woody Woodpecker
Yosemite Sam

PREHISTORIC RABBIT



In the grand old Disney tradition, *Who Framed Roger Rabbit* took a rather long, convoluted path on its way to the screen, with roots that go back to 1981, when the studio optioned Gary Wolf's novel *Who Censored Roger Rabbit?*

Wolf's book was significantly different from the finished movie in many respects: its cartoon characters worked in comic strips, not animated films; it was set in the present day; and the entire mystery plot was totally different. The movie was mentioned in the 1981 Disney annual report as an upcoming project, with Marc Sturdivant as producer and Darrell Van Citters as director of animation. As of the 1983 annual report, it was still a movie in the works, the title at that point being simply *Roger Rabbit*.

The movie was also previewed in a 1983 Disney Channel program on new and planned Disney works, which turned out to be the only extensive look at that version of *Roger Rabbit* that the public would ever see. The plot was outlined, model sheets of principal characters were displayed, and several very tantalizing minutes of pencil tests superimposed on live action were shown. The footage was excellent, and if anything made the interplay of human beings and cartoon characters a little more close-up and intimate than most of the final movie.

The Sturdivant/Van Citters *Roger Rabbit* was eventually dropped by the studio, where it lay in limbo for some time before the new Disney management, Steven Spielberg, and Robert Zemeckis picked it up and began again, apparently more or less from scratch.

Above: *Roger Rabbit*: the Darrell Van Citters interpretation. Copyright (c) the Walt Disney Company.

of a 1940s Tom and Jerry film that's even more remarkable than his work in *Roger*.

Williams's animation for *Who Framed Roger Rabbit* is not perfect, but it succeeds well in one of its most challenging tasks: it really does look like it might be the forty-year-old work of a forgotten cartoon studio. Most of the animation looks so at home in the 1947 setting that the one major lapse - Judge Doom's weasel henchmen, despite 1940s clothing, are too clearly 1980s creations - is more pronounced than it would have been otherwise.

The animation also meshes well with the lighting, shadowing, and other magic that has been applied to it by George Lucas's Industrial Light and Magic. It's obligatory that every review of the film call it a technical wonder, and it is one, even more so when one has seen one of the television features showing the impossibly-complex Rube-Goldberg techniques used to move live action props around in midair, their animated users to be filled in later. Indeed, the more cynical viewer might wonder if the effects are *too* complicated: does the fact that the weasels wield real guns rather than painted ones make the movie any more believable?

Perhaps so, but the lion's share of the ease with which you can suspend disbelief while watching this movie comes from the acting. The intensity with which Bob Hoskins relates to Roger is only a little less amazing when you know that Charlie Fleischer, Roger's voice, stood off-camera in a rabbit suit to read his lines. None of the other live-action actors in the movie spend remotely as much time bouncing off of animated costars as Hoskins does, but Joanna Cassidy, Christopher Lloyd, and others all help to make *Who Framed Roger Rabbit*'s Hollywood seem not just plausible but logical.

Ironically, Hoskins's floppy-eared costar has a little more trouble adjusting to the film's crossbreeding of live-action and animation than Hoskins does. Roger is a rather hyperactive rabbit whose constant fidgeting makes it hard to get a feel for him as a character. When he isn't engaged in an actual Tex Avery-style take, he frequently seems to be on the verge of one, flailing his limbs and bouncing about the screen, presumably mirroring the filmmakers' concept of what the classic Hollywood cartoon stars behaved like. He almost never stops to take a breath or consider his next move.

In contrast, so much of the brilliance of Tex Avery's and Chuck Jones's great cartoons came from their knowledge of when *not* to move their characters. These directors treated the rhythms of the real world as they did everything else: something to be twisted and squashed and distorted to meet their comic purposes. The pauses in an Avery cartoon are as funny as the bursts of action.

Of course, Richard Williams and the *Roger Rabbit* team were highly restricted in how they paced the animated footage. Roger and Jessica and the other characters had to keep in step, more or less, with what was going on in director Zemeckis's live-action story. This is not necessarily a problem: the great Disney feature cartoons, for instance, are no less magnificent because their pacing is relatively realistic and unstylized. But Roger is a distinctly Warner-type character, and he often he seems uncomfortably caught between the live-action and cartoon worlds. Jessica, being at least marginally a more naturalistic character, and certainly a more human one, seems much more at home in the live-action world.

Jessica is a more successful creation than her husband in other ways, too. Roger has a few scenes, notably his heart-to-heart talk with Eddie in a movie theater, in which he's fleetingly a sympathetic character with a well-defined personality. But these moments are punctuated with the aforementioned grandiose Avery takes which undermine Roger's believability as a character. You keep hoping that Roger will seize center stage, claiming his place as the star of the movie that bears his name. The script, though, doesn't give him enough to do; inexplicably, it has him unconscious and tied up during two of the film's major sequences. The rabbit is clearly more at home playing second banana, as he does in the Baby Herman cartoon that begins the film.

Somethin's Cookin' excepted, the movie's animation may be somewhat hamstrung by its attempt to pay homage to too many masters. Spielberg and Zemeckis have made it clear that *Who Framed Roger Rabbit* is in part a tribute to the Disney pictures of their youth, and its Warner-MGM influences are obvious. (Ultimately, the tribute to the Warner and MGM shorts seems a lot more heartfelt than that paid to the Disney characters, most of whom come off as being rather sappy.) The movie

draws inspiration from the Fleischer studio, too: its frequent anthropomorphizing of animated objects - the shoe Judge Doom dips to death, the bullets in Eddie's toon gun - is much more a Fleischer trait than one of the West Coast studios.

It's good to see a major movie acknowledge so many animation giants, but by failing to blend these disparate styles into an altogether-pleasing style, the movie proves it's as difficult to pay homage to Disney, Jones, Avery, and Fleischer in one cohesive work as it would be to do so to Hitchcock, Welles, Renoir, and Griffith in one modern dramatic film. That's a nice compliment to the diversity of the golden age of Hollywood animation.

The use of veteran cartoon stars from the Disney, Warner, Fleischer, MGM, and Lantz studios - a facet of the film that has almost gotten lost in the fuss over its blending of live action and animation - is only partially successful. As numerous disappointing TV shows and theatrical films have shown, reviving classic characters is a very tricky business: it's awfully hard for contemporary filmmakers to equal the animation, story material, and timelessness that made a great character great in the first place.

The Williams and Baer animators have done as good a job as any of accomplishing several aspects of this chal-

lenge. The characters certainly *look* good; they're not only well-drawn, they're usually drawn according to the historically-correct model sheets for the film's 1947 setting. Those are really Mickey and Donald and Daffy and Bugs up there, not the ringers who have occasionally stood in for them in contemporary Disney and Warner cartoons.

They sound good, too. Mae Questel slips merrily back into the role of Betty Boop as if fifty years hadn't passed since Miss Boop retired from the screen, and Mel Blanc gives his best performances as Bugs and Daffy in years. Interestingly, Blanc relinquishes the role of Yosemite Sam in the film to another performer, who, like the second-and-third-generation voices for Mickey, Donald, and others, does his job admirably.

Betty Boop's aforementioned scene as a has-been cigarette girl in the Ink and Paint club, and Droopy's delightfully-surprising appearance as an elevator operator in Toontown, work very well indeed. The other special guests have less clever material to work with. Neither of the two big cross-studio teamups are the events they might have been. Donald and Daffy's piano duet isn't bad, but it's a bit overwhelmed by the technology apparent in the scene - their reflections on the pianos, the shifting live-action seats they sit on, and so on.

The first joint appearance of Mickey Mouse and Bugs Bunny, in the Toontown sequence, is far less successful. The two greatest stars in cartoon history have wonderfully clashing personalities that suggest endless possibilities. But the movie just makes them part of a fairly minor scene that doesn't draw on their personalities in the slightest; it might as well have featured Barney Bear and Little Audrey.

The crowd scene at the movie's conclusion, too, is an important moment in cartoon history that just isn't as interesting as it could have been. So many characters are crammed into this brief sequence that none of them has time to do anything very interesting. Considering how well the animators accomplished the daunting task of breathing life into so many great cartoon stars, it's too bad that only a few of the characters get the kind of material they deserve, and intriguing to wonder what it would have been like if the script had eschewed the cameos in favor of meaty roles for just a few classic characters.

If this review has spent too much time niggling at the movie's imperfections, and not enough time celebrating its many excellences (and perhaps it has), it's mostly because the movie has been so thoroughly praised in so many places that everything has already been said a thousand times. This is a movie that's been loved to bits; your reviewer saw only three unfavorable reviews, in *Time*, *The New Yorker*, and *The New Republic*, and only the last of these was resoundingly negative.

Even more remarkable is the fact that *Roger* is the biggest boxoffice hit of 1988; how many of us would have believed a year ago that a talking Disney rabbit in red overalls would deck Eddie Murphy at the box office this Summer? He has, and suddenly the idea that other animated works may appeal to audiences of all ages is not such an unlikely one.

It's nice to see mainstream critics, and mainstream audiences, taking animation to their collective bosom so eagerly. *Roger Rabbit* is an inestimably better spokesman for the art of animation than almost almost any cartoon character of his generation, and if *who Framed Roger Rabbit* does nothing else but remind the American public that animation is alive and kicking, it will have earned a place as one of the more important works in the history of the artform.



ANIMATO FILM POLL

After a long hiatus, here's the return of the Animato Film Poll, our admittedly-unscientific survey of your favorites in five categories of animation - feature films, theatrical shorts, independent shorts, TV specials, and TV series. (The name of the director or producer follows the title in all categories except feature films.)

Purists will undoubtedly grouse at how we've classified some cartoons: *Family Dog* was not a special, but an episode of *Amazing Stories*, and *Luxo, Jr.*, being the product of a multimillion-dollar company (Pixar), isn't really an independent work. (Indeed, "independent" is a hard-to-define term - if you can think of a better title for that category, tell us.)

To cast your votes (isn't democracy wonderful?), just send us your top-ten lists in those five classifications to Animato Film Poll, PO Box 1240, Cambridge, MA 02238. But please, no ballot-stuffing. If *Rainbow Brite* and the *Star Stealer* is going to win our poll, it'll have to do it the honest way.

FEATURE FILMS

1. *Fantasia*
2. *Yellow Submarine*
3. *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs*
4. *Pinocchio*
5. *Secret of NIMH*
6. *Bambi*
7. *Allegro Non Troppo*
8. *Watership Down*
9. *101 Dalmations*
10. *Rock & Rule*
11. *Wizards*
12. *Who Framed Roger Rabbit*
13. *Heavy Metal*
14. *Dumbo*
15. *Peter Pan*
16. *Lady and the Tramp*
17. *Tron*
18. *The Black Cauldron*
19. *Castle of Cagliostro*
20. *Be Forever Yamato*
21. *The Last Unicorn*
22. *Raggedy Ann and Andy*
23. *Phoenix 2772*
24. *Laputa: Castle in the Sky*
25. *The Hobbit*
26. *Jungle Book*
27. *Warriors of the Wind*
28. *Song Of the South*
29. *Three Caballeros*
30. *Galaxy Express 999*

INDEPENDENT SHORTS

1. *Wizard of Speed and Time* - Mike Jittlov
2. *The Great Cognito* - Will Vinton
3. *Animato* - Mike Jittlov
4. *Futuropolis* - Steve Segal & Phil Trumbo
5. *Bambi Meets Godzilla* - Marv Newland
6. *Quasi at the Quackadero* - Sally Cruikshank
7. *Luxo, Jr.* - John Lasseter
8. *Closed Mondays* - Will Vinton
9. *Tango* - Zbigniew Rybczynski
10. *Vincent* - Tim Burton
11. *The Collector (Mickey Madness)* - Mike Jittlov
12. *Opera* - Bruno Bozzetto & Guido Manuli
13. *Anna and Bella* - Borge Ring
14. *Make Me Psychic* - Sally Cruikshank
15. *The Big Snit* - Richard Condie
16. *The Critic* - Ernie Pintoff
17. *Broken Down Film* - Osamu Tezuka
18. *Furies* - Sara Petty
19. *Sunbeam* - Paul Vester
20. *Sundae in New York* - Jimmy Picker
21. *The Street* - Caroline Leaf
22. *Elbowing* - Paul Driessen
23. *Interview* - Mike Jittlov
24. *Flying Fur* - George Griffin
25. *The Fly* - Ferenc Rofusz
26. *Jimmy the C* - Jimmy Picker
27. *Rapid Eye Movements* - Jeff Carpenter
28. *Jumping* - Osamu Tezuka
29. *Vanz Kant Danz* - Will Vinton
30. *Seaside Woman* - Oscar Grillo

THEATRICAL SHORTS

1. *Little Rural Riding Hood* - Tex Avery
2. *Duck Amuck* - Chuck Jones
3. *The Band Concert* - Wilfred Jackson
4. *One Froggy Evening* - Chuck Jones
5. *What's Opera, Doc?* - Chuck Jones
6. *Popeye Meets Sinbad the Sailor* - Dave Fleischer
7. *The Dover Boys* - Chuck Jones
8. *The Old Mill* - Wilfred Jackson
9. *Coal Black and De Sebben Dwarfs* - Bob Clampett
10. *Duck Dodgers in the 24 1/2 Century* - Chuck Jones
11. *Bimbo's Initiation* - Dave Fleischer
12. *Snow White* - Dave Fleischer
13. *Popeye Meets Ali Baba's 40 Thieves* - Dave Fleischer
14. *Book Revue* - Bob Clampett
15. *Mechanical Monsters* - Dave Fleischer
16. *The Great Piggy Bank Robbery* - Bob Clampett
17. *Minnie the Moocher* - Dave Fleischer
18. *Robin Hood Daffy* - Chuck Jones
19. *The Rabbit of Seville* - Chuck Jones
20. *The Skeleton Dance* - Walt Disney
21. *The Cat Who Hated People* - Tex Avery
22. *Bad Luck Blackie* - Tex Avery
23. *Duck Rabbit Duck* - Chuck Jones
24. *King Size Canary* - Tex Avery
25. *Mickey's Trailer* - Ben Sharpsteen
26. *Cookie Carnival* - Ben Sharpsteen
27. *Superman* - Dave Fleischer
28. *Kitty Kornered* - Bob Clampett
29. *Dizzy Red Riding Hood* - Dave Fleischer
30. *I Love to Singa* - Tex Avery

TV SERIES

1. *The Bullwinkle Show*
2. *Mighty Mouse: the New Adventures*
3. *Dangermouse*
4. *Jonny Quest*
5. *DuckTales*
6. *The Jetsons*
7. *Beany and Cecil*
8. *Count Duckula*
9. *Lupin III*
10. *Top Cat*
11. *Star Trek*
12. *George of the Jungle*
13. *Adventures of the Gummi Bears*
14. *The Flintstones*
15. *Starblazers*
16. *Robotech*
17. *Dungeons and Dragons*
18. *Speed Racer*
19. *Space Ghost*
20. *Tom Terrific*
21. *Wally Gator*
22. *Hoppity Hooper*
23. *Yogi Bear*
24. *Mighty Orbots*
25. *Dirty Pair*
26. *Dynomutt*
27. *Inspector Gadget*
28. *Astro Boy*
29. *Good Morning Spank*
30. *New Adventures of Flash Gordon*

TV SPECIALS

1. *How The Grinch Stole Christmas* - Chuck Jones
2. *Family Dog* - Brad Bird
3. *A Charlie Brown Christmas* - Bill Melendez
4. *A Christmas Carol* - Richard Williams
5. *A Claymation Christmas* - Will Vinton
6. *Banjo the Woodpile Cat* - Don Bluth
7. *A Ziggy Christmas* - Richard Williams
8. *Doonesbury* - John & Faith Hubley
9. *A Pogo Special Birthday Special* - Chuck Jones
10. *It's the Great Pumpkin, Charlie Brown* - Bill Melendez
11. *Here Comes Peter Cottontail* - Rankin/Bass
12. *Carnival of the Animals* - Chuck Jones
13. *A Cosmic Christmas* - Clive Smith
14. *Cathy* - Bill Melendez
15. *Mr. Magoo's Christmas Carol* - Abe Levitow
16. *A Soldier's Tale* - R.O. Blechman
17. *Sport Goofy in Soccermania* - Darrell Van Citters
18. *Rudolph the Red Nosed Reindeer* - Rankin/Bass
19. *Rikki Tikki Tavi* - Chuck Jones
20. *Charlie Brown's All Stars* - Bill Melendez

CHINESE ANIMATION'S
PAST, PRESENT, AND FUTURE

THE MONKEY KING OF
SHANGHAI

BY ETHAN GILSDORF

Shanghai is a great city of contradictions. The city certainly does not seem to be part of the quintessential "China" that westerners may imagine. It is almost as if the Chinese are out of place in this city, living in a British landscape with American clothes. Once entirely Chinese, Shanghai was invaded by the British and French during the Opium Wars and forced to become a trading partner of the West.

Consequently, the culture of the city, as seen in its people and arts, has transformed into a hybrid of both tradition and western modernity. Thousand year-old temples sit next to masterpieces of gothic and art deco architecture; wide boulevards are lined with trees and sidewalks in European fashion; and streets are filled with pedestrians and bicyclists sporting both the usual Mao outfits and western-style jeans and

shirts. And images of Mickey Mouse and Donald Duck can be found everywhere, from motorcycle repair shop advertisements to soap dish decorations.

Shanghai's new western influence should not disguise the originality and depth of Chinese cinema, for out of this mixed environment has emerged a new and rich film culture, including animation. While most film production and instruction is centered at the Beijing Film Academy, and the most artistic live-action films today are produced at the Xi'an Film Studio, the bulk of all animated films are produced at the Shanghai Animation Film Studio. This studio was formed when the cartoon division of the Northeast China Film Studio, one of several branch studios throughout the country, moved to Shanghai in 1950. The studio was officially organized in 1957, and Te Wei, who is considered to be the father of

Chinese animation, became its head.

But the full history of Chinese animation goes back before the establishment of this national animation facility, to an era the government is fond of calling "before the liberation." In fact, the year was 1920 when the Wan brothers delved into the then-new art of animation with a production entitled *Tumult in the Studio*. Because the medium was new to China, the brothers had to overcome difficulties of both capital and equipment to produce their historic first film. It resembled much of the other animation produced in its day: black-and-white, silent, celluloid animation. Their later films (*Catch a Turtle in a Jar*, *Tale of a Paper Troublemaker*) employed similar techniques, with one exception: these films were based in fact, unlike the outlandish fantasies of Koko the Clown and Felix the Cat in the west.

Two scenes from a Monkey King film of the 1930s.





From *Good Friend*.

The Wan brothers went on to be influenced by the government campaign against Japan. During the 1930s, they reflected anti-imperialist themes in more than twenty films, including *Bloody Coins*, *Save the Nation by Aviation*, *Painful National History*, and *New Tide*. Like similar films produced by Frank Capra and Walt Disney during World War II, these films urged national unity and support for the war effort. *Year of National Commodity* and *The Leek* urged consumers to purchase Chinese goods; *Detective Dog* warned against the dangers of drugs; and children were the intended audience of the allegorical films *Rat and Frog*, *Unexpected Disaster*, and *Race Between the Tortoise and Rabbit*.

Though surely labeled propaganda by western audiences, these films were no less biased than similar ones produced during wartime in the United States. The Wan brothers continued to make this type of films throughout the 1930s in support of the anti-Japanese movement. Such titles as *Special Collection in Support of Anti-Japanese War* and *Collection of Anti-Japanese War Songs* clearly show the films' uses. At this stage, Chinese films were seen not so much as a new art as a new tool for mobilization.

In 1940 the Wan brothers were asked to found the "Cartoon Section" of the Joint Film Company of Shanghai, demonstrating the government's interest in the new medium. It was in that year that they produced China's first feature-length film, *Iron-Fan Princess*, just three years after Disney had made *Snow White*. Though Japan was China's

enemy, the film was surprisingly well-received in the Asian community, including Singapore, Malaysia, and even Japan itself. By this time, however, the Pacific War was brewing, forcing the brothers Wan to abandon their interest in cartoons for lack of finances. Except for Qian Jiajun's political film *Happy Peasants* in 1941, very little animation was being produced at this time in China.

In postwar China, like in so many other countries, the art of film experienced a rebirth full of innovation and experimentation. While the period of 1926 to 1942 has been termed by Chinese officials the "early" stage of Chinese animation, the years from 1947 to 1956 are known as the "developmental period." It is during these years that two distinct genres of animation

were firmly established: cel animation and puppet/model animation. Coupled with an increase in personnel, as dozens of graduates from the Film Academy came to Shanghai, a prosperous and creative environment came into being that produced several excellent cartoons. Shorts such as *Good Friend*, *Why the Crow is Black*, *The Conceited General*, and the puppet films *The Wise Goat* and *The Magic Paintbrush* explored new styles that later became integrated into a specific national "look."

It was during this period that Mao Zedong led his country's peasants to victory and towards a new republic. Mao had new plans for Chinese film: he was interested in creating a new culture, one that combined art and politics into a cohesive whole that would reflect the party doctrine and serve Communism. Mao was so confident of the stability of his regime that he implemented the "Hundred Flowers Campaign" of 1956, which encouraged creative exploration and criticism of the government, with the hopes of ultimately improving the Communist state.

The formation of the Shanghai Animation Film Studio in April of 1957 was obviously a result of this new policy. Consequently, the period after the founding of the studio until just before the beginning of the Cultural Revolution in 1966 witnessed some of the most outstanding animated films in China's history.

The paper-cut film came into being in 1958, with Bao Lei's film *Piggy Eats Watermelon* (titles tend to lose something in translation). Paper-cut animation is a style that never really caught on as a major genre in the U.S. or Canada; it is more prominent in Eastern Europe and Asia. In China's case, the

From *Where is Momma*.





From *The Peacock Princess*.

style reflects the cultural tradition of both folk shadow plays and the ancient art of paper cutting. This synthesis of old and new styles in the arts is one that many Chinese are eager to point out to western observers.

Another traditional art technique was introduced into animation during this period, officially deemed the "Unforgettable Prosperous Years." Water ink animation, as seen in *Where is Momma* (art direction by Te Wei, technical direction by Qian Jiajun) and *The Cowboy's Flute* (by Te Wei, Duan Xiaoxuan, and Wu Yingju), demonstrates a much older and suggestive form of representation.

Where is Momma tells the story of lost tadpoles in search of their mother. Long, sweeping watercolor brushstrokes depict the action, rather than the detailed and "realistic" characterizations of the design aesthetic developed by Disney and his contemporaries. Disney sought believable situations involving animals acting out human parts, with a visual style that mirrored reality and the Hollywood live-action film as much as possible. The framing, shot structure, and editing of any Disney feature from *Snow White* onwards demonstrates this.

It is this aesthetic that the Chinese broke away from by returning to their own traditional techniques. What results from this impressionistic style is a

greater sense of the "folk" element in the cartoon. Typically accompanied by music only, the events of the film are elevated to a mythic stature.

The Peacock Princess, produced shortly after *Where is Momma*, represents the further development of puppet films into feature-length productions. Like paper cut-outs and water ink, puppets were also a throwback to an earlier age of Chinese culture, drawing upon the art of folk puppet shows. Folded paper films are another unique genre of Chinese animation, consisting of three-dimensional, puppet-like figures similar to Japanese origami. In *A Clever Duck*, produced in 1960 by Yu Zheguang, bird figures are cleverly animated in diorama settings, creating a complete "world" of paper.

In such films, it becomes clear that Chinese animation truly demonstrates its innovative potential in its connections to past arts. On the other hand, in a film like *Uproar in Heaven*, the old China seems to have been overwhelmed by a western aesthetic. While the film's content is Chinese (the story is an adventure epic based on the popular book *Journey to the West*), the characters are drawn realistically and animated competently in the multicolor, multi-plane cel fashion, seemingly in an attempt to copy a system already perfected in the west. It was not until

later on in Chinese film history that its animators would begin to experiment with techniques to produce uniquely Chinese cel animation.

China's once-open cultural atmosphere soon changed when it became apparent that the Hundred Flowers freedoms were too damaging to Mao's power. As early as 1957, during the anti-rightist campaign, Mao began to denounce those who spoke out against the government. After the failures of his radical industrialization attempts from 1958 to 1962, called the "Great Leap Forward," Mao acknowledged his previous mistakes and consequently threw the country into intense political and social upheaval.

This was the Cultural Revolution, an attempt to undo the changes of the previous decade, which resulted in closed schools, the shifting of millions of young Maoists from urban areas to the countryside in order to "spread the revolution," and the forcing of peasants into new, structured living arrangements that were contrary to Chinese tradition. Consequently, during this period, virtually no films were produced, save a few government documentaries designed to further spread Mao's word. The Film Academy was closed, and graduates were criticized or even "sent down" to be reeducated. Some were even put into prison.

Today, however, the Chinese are quick to dismiss those years of turmoil from 1966 to 1976 as Mao's grand failure. While Mao Zedong was once regarded as a godlike figure, he is now seen simply as a leader who somehow went wrong. At the time of his death in 1976 and later, after the trial of the Gang of Four, the country returned to a semblance of normality. Film production began again in earnest, with the Academy graduating a new breed of filmmakers, and the Shanghai Animation Studio turning out over one hundred films from 1978 to 1984.

Nezha Conquers the Dragon King, completed in 1979, was the first widescreen, full-color animated feature from China. Xu Jingda's *Three Monks* also is an important film, for its stylized characterizations and effective storytelling devices. The film manages to convey the sentiments of the parable clearly without the benefit of dialogue. Perhaps China's growing foreign ties

prompted animators to develop a pan-cultural style that would appeal to all filmgoers, especially judges of international film festivals.

This current period in Chinese animation has also allowed for a continued refinement of techniques that had previously been only in experimental stages. A subtle yet stunning work of paper-cut animation is Hu Jinqing's *Snipe-Clam Grapple*. Its beauty lies in delicate watercolor backgrounds and painted paper figures that take on the qualities of an ancient dynasty wall painting. The tale is simple: a bird and a clam fight over a fish, while a wistful fisherman watches from his riverboat. The motions are exquisitely precise, as the bird darts its head back and forth and the fish silently flops about on the shoreline. The film was a Golden Bear winner at the Berlin Festival, and consequently helped to establish China's positive reputation overseas. Other recent films of merit include the water-ink cartoons *Bell on a Deer* and *Fishing the Moon from the Pool* by Zhou Keqin, the cel film *Two Little Peacocks* by Yan Dingxian, and Hu Xionghua's paper-cut film *The Fox Hunts the Hunter*.

The Shanghai Film Animation Studio itself has undergone a certain renaissance in recent years by both reorganizing its administration and revamping its physical facilities. In 1984, Yan Dingxian, an animation director, was appointed to the directorship of the studio, while Te Wei, the former director, was repositioned as a consultant. The staff has swelled to over five hundred members (rivaling in number the heyday of the Disney studios) working in three spe-



cialized sections: cel, puppet, and paper-cut animation.

While the building itself seems a remnant of an earlier day, it is quite well organized, containing an assembly line-like production hierarchy. Again, a comparison to the Disney model seems accurate: the Shanghai facility is divided into sections for development, animation, assistant animation, backgrounds, inking and painting, photography, and special effects.

The studio possesses adequate equipment for shooting, editing, recording, and projecting films, as well as videotape capabilities. The equipment is by no means on the same technical level as that of European or American studios, but it nonetheless functions. One cannot help but realize that China's technology, in almost all respects, is at least twenty years behind that of the West. But increased creativity and inventiveness more than make up for the technical deficiencies.

Presently, the animation studio is involved in several large-scale productions. One is a coproduction with West Germany on a feature-length cartoon concerning animal characters in medieval times. Other longterm projects include *The Brothers Calabash*, a thirteen-episode paper-cut series, and *A Sloppy*

King, a thirteen-episode serial under development. *A Wonderful Mongolian Horse*, adapted from a play by English writer Han Shu Ying, shows China's willingness to recognize its much-neglected Mongolian cultural minority and to further create ties with other countries. And *A Tale of Catching Demons* is a six-episode puppet film that reaches back to China's literary past with its version of the famous novel *Feng Shen Yan Yi*.

But ultimately, it seems to be popular characters and familiar stories that sell theater tickets in China today. The *Monkey King*, China's well-known folk hero, has recently appeared in the boxoffice success *Monkey King Conquers the Demon* (1985), cowritten and directed by none other than the father of Chinese animation, Te Wei. Like Mickey Mouse, the character of the *Monkey King* has undergone a gradual evolution to keep up with the times. Gone are the tube-like arms and legs of the 1930s, and exaggerated motions of the 1950s and 1960s. The new 1980s *Monkey King* is a realistic, more flatly-drawn character that represents both changing styles and financial cutbacks; one is reminded of the style of *Masters of the Universe* and the like. But he still fights fantastic beasts, flies through the air, and is accompanied by his faithful pig friend.

And of course, a moral is to be learned from his adventures. As the preface to the Shanghai Animation Film Studio guide notes, "Chinese animation films are outstanding on two points: healthy contents, promoting real artistic and education significance; secondly, diversity and unique national style." While sword-wielding monkeys and pigs make questionable role models for children (the same could be said for He-Man and his lot), it is obvious that China's animators are quickly making their stylistic mark on the world animation community. The only hope is that they do not follow the lead of the boxoffice receipt to decide what kind of animated films get produced. China should be wiser than the West in that respect, and instead turn to its rich artistic past for inspiration.

(The author is indebted to Xinyu "Harvey" Yang for his translation of Chinese references.)



On this page: two scenes from *Monkey King Conquers the Demon*.

THAT OTHER WALT

JACK HANNAH AT THE WALTER LANTZ STUDIOS



INTERVIEW BY JIM KORKIS

John Frederick (Jack) Hannah was born in Nogales, Arizona, on January 5th, 1913. After attending grammar school and high school in San Ysidro and National City, California, he moved to Los Angeles to take an art course at the Art Guild Academy in 1931. His first jobs were as a poster designer for Foster and Kleiser and for Hollywood theaters.

He joined the Walt Disney Studios in January of 1933 and spent twenty-five years there as an animator, storyman (teamed with Carl Barks), and director. He worked on over a hundred cartoons featuring Donald Duck, Chip n' Dale, and Humphrey the Bear. During Hannah's years at Disney, his work received eight Academy Award nominations. He also directed fourteen hour-long television shows. He left the studio in 1959 and for the next three years spent time as a supervising director at Walter Lantz Productions.

In 1975, Hannah was asked by the Disney Studios to take charge of the School of Character Animation at the California Institute of the Arts (CalArts) in Valencia, California. Many of Hannah's students there have become award-winning animators themselves. Hannah is a skilled landscape artist, and his paintings are displayed in galleries throughout the west. His most recent honor was an Annie award from ASIFA.

I first met Hannah in 1977, and since that time have interviewed him several times and written a handful of articles about his contributions to the art of animation. For over a decade, Jack has been gracious, candid, and patient as I've talked with him about his career. In this exclusive Animato interview, Hannah shares some of his thoughts about his time spent working for Walter Lantz, the father of Woody Woodpecker.

Jim Korkis

Korkis: *Why did you leave Disney in the late 1950s?*

Hannah: The emphasis at the studio was being taken off the shorts and animation in general. The shorts were becoming way too expensive to produce. At the time, a lot of the cartoon studios were finding it too expensive a process, and had to stop cartoon production. Fortunately, I was lucky being a Donald Duck man, because the character was used quite extensively during the first couple of years of the *Disneyland* TV show. So I moved over to directing many of those shows, and I was responsible for directing all of those segments where Walt talked with the Duck.

I had really gotten the "live action bug," and wanted to be a live-action director. I suggested this to Walt several times. In fact, we had a few heated discussions on this subject, but I began to realize that I had reached an impasse at Disney's.

So you decided to look for work elsewhere?

Actually, Gerry Geronimi, who was a longtime friend of Walter Lantz's, talked to me. He had gotten wind of my predicament and told Walter. I had never met Lantz before 1959, but he gave me a call and he and Bill Garity, who was Walter's right-hand man at the time, took me to lunch at the Lakeside Country Club and invited me to join them. We talked salary, but more importantly, Lantz made me an offer that I would be his supervising director. Walter wanted to do more traveling, so I would help run the production end of the studio from the creative side, and Garity would be running the business end, when Walter was on his vacation trips.

Can you remember anything else about the first meeting?

Walter told me that he was very short on stories and wanted me to bring my first story with me when I came over to start work. I got Milt Banta to work with me on the story. Walter paid his writing fee. I brought Walter the story and he accepted it right away. I always thought that that was very clever that from the moment I walked in as a director I had my first story all ready to go. It was called *Freeloading Feline*.

Didn't you bring some of your Disney crew with you?

When I left Disney, they were breaking up my whole unit. I took Riley Thompson with me, who was a very good draftsman. He worked at Disney for years and did a little bit of everything: direction, animation, comic strips. I took Riley as my layout man when I went over to Lantz's. I also took Ray Huffine and Al Coe. Coe was a good animator who never reached the stature as far as his name was concerned, but he was a real good all-around animator. He did a lot of the Humphrey the Bear stuff for me. He worked out fine in my unit at Lantz's. Even after I left Lantz's later, the people I brought over with me stayed on.

Lantz seems to have picked up a lot of ex-Disney artists.

Walter once told me he was one of the luckiest producers in the business. He never had a training program or anything like that. He would just find people like myself who had a great deal of experience and catch 'em at just the right time when they were between studios. He got Dick Lundy, who was a top director. Fred Moore came along and animated just some beautiful stuff for Lantz. Fred was probably one of the most natural animators to ever hit the industry, and Lantz picked him up almost immediately after he left Disney.

Lantz got some of the top talent. I've seen cartoons from the Lantz studio done by these guys and there are a couple of them that were great, top things, and done within budget. Lantz was really lucky, and he never hid the fact.

It must have been different than working at Disney.

It was a completely different way of working. At the Disney studio you had storymen, a layout man, a background man, and you had all these different departments. But at Lantz the director practically did everything himself in the laying out of the picture for animation. You did a rough layout, anyway. Paul Smith worked that way. I changed that somewhat when I brought over Ray Huffine.

Illustrations of Lantz characters copyright (c) Walter Lantz Productions, Inc.



Jack Hannah

Being a storyman yourself, what was it like working on story at Lantz's?

We didn't have hired storymen on staff. The directors usually had some background in story and had a lot of input into each cartoon. Walter would contract men from outside the studio to come in and do the stories. Then we'd have a meeting with these storymen telling the story, and the director and Walter would sit in on these meetings, and naturally Walter would add little gags here and there. He was a pretty good gag man. He was a gag man back in the old days when the philosophy of animation was "gag for a gag's sake" more than personality type gags, which Disney was more interested in doing. As long as your animation was entertaining, Walter would overlook minor flaws in the story because of budget.

Right after I got started, Walter had to leave for Europe for a vacation trip or business trip. I forget which. He asked me if I would take charge of buying the stories and let Bill Garity know when I had okayed a story, so that the storymen could be paid off. Some of the storymen would get a bit ruffled when I would make 'em go back and make changes in the story before they got paid. Apparently, whoever was handling things before me let these guys get away with murder on some of these shorts, by

accepting the first draft without corrections.

Anyway, some of these storymen would get a bit mad at me, because some of them were just knocking out the quickest story they could, so they could get paid. But they'd go home and make the corrections. When Walter got back from Europe. I had about nine to twelve stories all lined up, and he was tickled because he could go right into production without worrying about the story situation.

Did you ever run into Walt Disney during this time at Lantz?

A few months after leaving Disney and working for Lantz, we all met at the Masquers Club at a testimonial-type dinner for artist Jimmy Swinnerton. I was sitting with Lantz and Disney came over and made a remark, something to the effect of "Is Jack breaking you, too, by going over budget?" Walter immediately replied, "No, the first short just came in, and it was right on budget." And Walt turned away and walked back to his table, and that was the end of the conversation. I always got a kick out of that. I was very pleased and proud of Walter for standing up for me like that.

I've heard that Lantz can be very supportive.

He was very supportive, especially when I was directing him in the live-action segments for his TV show. I think it made me more creative, because I didn't have the fear of being rejected. So I came out with some ideas I felt were pretty good, and Walter went along with them. I think there was a lot of good psychology there, because he wouldn't squelch you right off the bat, but let you do some some free thinking and come up with some new ideas.

Naturally, we could never use all of the ideas; some had to be tossed out for one reason or another. Disney was a little tougher on you than that lots of the time. You were afraid to go out in left field with Disney for fear of getting squelched.

How did you get involved directing the live-action introductions for the Woody Woodpecker show?

I had done several shorts for Walter and he wanted to start a TV series. Walt



Three characters Jack Hannah worked on while at Lantz: Chilly Willy, Charlie Beary, and Gabby Gator.

Disney had had me join the Director's Guild so that I could direct the live-action segments on his TV show. Lantz knew that I belonged to the Director's Guild and that I had experience directing, so I was the natural choice. In some ways it was quite similar to the work I did at Disney, but with Walter getting friendly with Woody Woodpecker. We couldn't go into quite the extensive production we did at Disney because we had a smaller budget. Walter seemed pleased with the ideas I incorporated into the scripts.

Unlike Disney, Walter took direction almost too well. He was pleased with any new ideas I suggested, and wasn't afraid to try them. As a result, I think he came off looking real good in these introductions. He had a free and easy attitude; he wasn't self-conscious. In fact, in the middle of one of these introductions, Walter had the line "Around the world with Woody," because it was a sequence showing Woody in different parts of the world. I suggested having Walter spinning a globe as he said his lines, and he did a real good job at it. We had to stop filming, because he was so pleased he just blurted out, "Jack, you can direct anything!" Of course, whether he meant it or not didn't mean as much to me as just having him say it. It certainly

pumped me up a bit.

The two of you really seem to have hit it off from the start.

When I first came to the studio, Walter decided to invite a group of his employees, including me, down to his boat in Balboa to go out on a little cruise. He kept looking down at my feet, and I wondered what was bothering him. Then I realized that I had street shoes on and everybody else had tennis shoes. He thought I was going to mar up his deck but never said a word. Years later when I had to introduce him at some function, I told the story, but I embellished it a bit and said he turned a little green and was getting seasick. Walter loved the story. He had this big grin on his face. That tells you a lot about the man. He had a good sense of humor about himself.

What was it like doing Woody Woodpecker cartoons?

Woody was well-designed and simple, so there was no problem in working with him. Gracie [Lantz's wife, who does Woody's voice] knew the character inside and out, backwards and forwards, and she was very easy to direct doing the vocals. This may surprise you, but Woody

reminded me a lot of Donald Duck. Very close personalities. I had worked so much with Donald that I felt right at home with Woody. Woody had a short temper too, and would goad somebody into trouble. Most of the time the Duck was paid back, especially if the nephews were involved. Donald never got away with things. With Woody it was different. Woody got away with things.

Woody was already well established, and like I say, somewhat like Donald Duck, who I had gotten very tired of working with over at Disney's. It started to seem that one Donald Duck short was just like another, and we were running dry on ideas for this crazy character. Therefore, it was more fun for me to reach out and work with a new character. Gabby Gator had a new locale out in the swamps, and his personality was different from other characters I had worked on, so I may have enjoyed him a little more than Woody.

Did you create the character of Gabby Gator?

I know you've asked me this before, and I just don't recall creating the character, but I don't remember anyone else doing it, either. I directed the first cartoon he was in, *Southern Fried Hospitality*, and I remember working on his character.

He was a good character to work with. I always saw him as a kind of Charlie Chaplin type in the fact that he was always looking for a meal but wasn't about to earn it.

Did you develop any other characters while you were working at the Lantz studio?

I did a series with a couple of monkeys. I can't recall what we called them. I know we made a short with them. It took place in a jungle, and they were similar to Chip n' Dale in that there was a smart guy who was always getting upset over the dumb guy's antics.

Walter was looking for a character for a TV series, and I developed the Beary Family. The name was a take-off on Wallace Beery, who was very popular. We had a father, mother, and stupid son. I don't think I ever directed a short with them, just did development work.

Why did you decide to use some live-action footage in the Chilly Willy cartoon Mackerel Moocher?

I don't recall if the idea was incorporated into the story or if I came up with the idea later while I was doing the cartoon. I got the idea of seeing these fishing boats leaving the San Pedro harbor and speeding up to ridiculous speeds to get more fish for Chilly.

Walter had no complaint about my experimenting that way, as long as I stayed within budget. He'd like to see you have innovative thoughts, because cartoons can get very monotonous, no matter what character you are working with at the time. As I remember, Bill Garity, who was in charge of costs, hit the ceiling about it, but Walter stood up for me because he liked the idea, too. Walter gave me a lot of freedom, as long as I stayed within budget. That was one thing Walter was very aware of, and one of the reasons he stayed in business while others closed up shop.

It sounds like Walter was around the studio a lot.

Unless he was on a trip, he was around quite a bit. He was the boss, so sometimes he'd come in an hour later than the rest of us. Garity was doing a good job with the financial end of it, and everything was pretty much a well-oiled machine. As long as things kept rolling smoothly, Walter was never worried.

Did Lantz ever consider doing a feature-length cartoon?

I think Walter knew he didn't have the time nor material to get into a full-length animated feature. I don't recall him mentioning he was interested in doing a feature, at least while I was there. I think he was satisfied with what he was doing. Just because he was able to do it. In those days it was getting just terrible. The theaters weren't running cartoon shorts in their program. Cartoons were costing more to make than they could charge the theaters in rental. That's why Disney quit making them completely. It was simply a question of money.

Did you ever preview your shorts at local theaters?

I don't recall previewing Lantz shorts at local theaters like we did at Disney's. I don't know why.

What was Paul Smith like?

He was a real nice guy. They loved him there. Whatever the storymen gave him, he put it down just the way it was. He reminded me of Jack King at Disney in that way. They added nothing and took nothing out. He never gave them any surprises. He was always right there in budget. They liked that.

Didn't you help Lantz with his oil painting?

I had been doing quite a bit of oil painting myself, and on my lunch hour I'd bring a lunch and do some work on my oils. Walter was working with oils at home, and he'd bring his oils in and I'd critique them. I didn't want to touch his canvas, so I would put a cel on top, and I would do my painting changes, like suggesting a better composition. He would take it home to compare and sometimes make changes. He really started improving rapidly.

Wasn't your desire to do more painting one of the reasons you left Lantz?

I left Lantz on good terms. I felt I just needed to move on. I had been at Disney's for a long time. I felt I was just repeating myself at Lantz's. My landscape painting had been getting some recognition and began getting into galleries, so I decided to direct my

creativity in that direction.

Do you have any final thoughts about Walter Lantz?

Everything is on the positive side, if I had to describe Walter Lantz. He was always smiling. I don't remember ever seeing a frown on his face. He was always complimentary. He never came in and cut you down, even if you deserved it. He always found a way to soften it. He would have made a good diplomat in that way. It was something inside him. He was a very sweet guy.

JACK HANNAH AT LANTZ: A FILMOGRAPHY

The following is a listing of the Walter Lantz productions for which Jack Hannah received credit.

- 1959 *Bee Bopped* (Windy and Breezy)
- 1960 *Freeloading Feline*
Hunger Strife
Southern Fried Hospitality (Woody)
- 1961 *Poop Deck Private* (Woody)
Egg Napper
The Bird Who Came to Dinner (Woody)
Gabby's Diner (Woody)
Clash and Carry (Chilly Willy)
Bears and the Bee Bees
Frankenstymied (Woody)
Busman's Holiday (Woody)
Tin Can Concert
Doc's Last Stand (Doc)
Woody's Kook-Out (Woody)
- 1962 *Rock-a-Bye Gator* (Woody)
Pest of Show (Doc and Champ)
Mackerel Moocher (Chilly Willy)
Rocket Racket (Woody)
Voo-Doo Boo-Hoo (Woody)
Punchy Pooch (Doc and Champ)
Corny Concerto (Doc and Champ)
- 1963 *Fish and Chips* (Chilly Willy)
Jim Korkis



KOKO KOMMENTS

A FLEISCHER STUDIOS COLUMN BY G. MICHAEL DOBBS

SUPERMAN, PART THREE (PLUS A FLEISCHER VIDEO GUIDE)

The Superman cartoons are beginning to surface in their original form. The original camera negatives of the Technicolor shorts are in the film archives of UCLA, and new prints have been struck from these 35mm negatives. As I write, the animation world is waiting for the "authorized" tape of the seventeen shorts from Warner Bros. as part of the company's fiftieth anniversary celebration of the character.

I recently purchased a tape of all seventeen cartoons from The Movie Exchange, Suite 749, 7095 Hollywood Blvd., 104, Hollywood, CA 90028. Although advertised as being from the 35mm prints, *The Mummy Strikes* and *Terror on the Midway* are from 16mm dupes. The tape is not a complete disappointment, though, as the rest of the cartoons are great and the video transfer is professional. The recording is even done on the SP speed on a T-160 TDK tape. No penny-pinching there! The cost is \$39.95 plus shipping.

The Superman cartoons were released to television in the early fifties, and many black-and-white prints were made for early broadcast. Color prints were also made eventually. The rights to the cartoons evidently reverted to National Publications/DC, and apparently someone in its copyright renewal program did not prevent the shorts from falling into public domain.

There are many public-domain tapes floating around featuring about half the cartoons, and the best of these I've seen

is manufactured by Goodtimes Home Video. With the expected release from Warner, my advice is to wait the "authorized" edition.

Last issue's *Koko Komments* included a look at each of the Fleischer Superman cartoons. The Famous Studios Superman cartoons that completed the series are examined below.

Superman in the Japoteurs (c) September 18, 1942. Directed by Seymour Kneitel; story by Bill Turner and Carl Meyer; animated by Myron Waldman and Nicholas Tafuri.

The first of the wartime propaganda Superman shorts. *Japoteurs* features a Charlie Chan lookalike spy attempting to steal a huge new airplane.

Superman in Showdown (c) October 16, 1942. Directed by Isadore Sparber; story by Jay Morton; animated by Steve Muffati and Graham Place.

While this cartoon is not the science-fiction epic many of the other shorts are, it is nevertheless a very enjoyable entry in the series. Superman must clear his name of a string of robberies committed by a lookalike.

Superman in the Eleventh Hour (c) November 20, 1942. Directed by Dan Gordon; story by Carl Meyer and William Turner; animated by Willard Bowsky and William Henning.

I can't help but imagine that this cartoon was popular with wartime au-

diences, as Superman is seen carrying out nightly raids on the Japanese shipyards, but the story is amazingly weak. How did Lois and Clark manage to get themselves captured? Doesn't Lois finally suspect Clark's secret? When Lois is rescued, Clark/Superman is left behind. Doesn't that look fishy?

Superman in Destruction, Inc. (c) December 25, 1942. Directed by Isadore Sparber; story by Jay Morton; animated by Dave Tendlar and Tom Moore.

A rather unexciting short in which Superman fights a sabotage ring at a Metropolis munitions plant. The most interesting aspect of the short is the apparent caricature of Dave Fleischer as one of the bad guys!

Superman in the Mummy Strikes (c) February 19, 1943. Directed by Isadore Sparber; story by Jay Morton; animated by Myron Waldman and Graham Place.

An atmospheric mummy with another amusing in-joke: the dead Egyptian king is named Tush! Although the two mummies are not as horrific in concept as good old Kharis in the popular Universal movie series, the undead giants are suitable sparring partners for Superman.

Superman in Jungle Drums (c) March 26, 1943. Directed by Dan Gordon; story by Robert Little and Jay Morton; animated by Orestes Calpini and H.C. Ellison.



Selected panels from a 1940s comic book story in which Lois Lane and Clark Kent enjoyed a Superman cartoon. Copyright (c) DC Comics, Inc.

The Nazis pose as gods to an African tribe to intercept Allied efforts, and Lois is captured by them. While the idea is interesting, the racist caricatures of the black tribesmen add nothing to this short.

Superman in the Underground World (c) June 18, 1943. Directed by Seymour Kneitel; story by Jay Morton; animated by Nicholas Tafuri and Reuben Grossman.

The next-to-last cartoon in the series reflects some of the earlier themes of science-fiction adventure, as Clark and Lois accompany an expedition into unexplored caverns. There they find a race of birdmen who mutely attempt to destroy them. The animation, backgrounds, and sound design are all wonderful.

Superman in the Secret Agent (c) July 30, 1943. Directed by Seymour Kneitel; story by Carl Meyer; animated by Steve Muffati and Otto Feuer.

The last Superman theatrical cartoon features the Man of Steel saving a young woman fleeing from a spy ring with important information. The animation and pacing are nice and the cartoon ends on a very patriotic note with our hero flying around the nation's capitol. One wonders if the spy ring leader is really a caricature of Max Fleischer.

With the explosion of home video came the rediscovery of many great

films by film fans and the discovery of the ramifications of the copyright laws by business people. Undoubtedly, one element in the growth of home video has been the inexpensive public domain videotape, which has provided the starter volumes of many collections.

There are both good and bad sides to PD tapes. They are generally far cheaper than tapes of protected material, but one takes one's chances with shoddy tapes, poor video mastering, and dupey prints. Since all my friends know of my interest in the works of Max Fleischer, I've received nearly every PD Fleischer videotape available, and what I've not been given, I've purchased. Taking a quick look at some of the available tapes, here's a little guide to steer you in the right direction.

Cartoon Favorites: Betty Boop (Trans-Atlantic Video). This tape, recorded in the LP mode, includes *Swat that Fly*, *Betty in Blunderland*, *Musical Mountaineers*, and *So Does an Automobile*. The prints are not in bad shape and the video transfer was done with care. The result is a clear, fairly crisp image.

Betty Boop Classic Cartoons, Volume 2 (United American Video Corp.). I've purchased several different tapes distributed by this company, and every one of them has been highly acceptable. All of its tapes are recorded in the LP mode, and this one, like the rest I've seen, has a clear picture. The tape features the cartoons *Betty Boop and Grampy*, *Betty Boop and Henry*, *Not Now*, *Judge for a Day*, and *You're Not Built that Way*.

Superstar Video Cartoons: Betty Boop (Nippon). This is a terrible tape recorded in the SP mode, undoubtedly in an attempt to improve the dupey cartoons used. *Crazytown*, *Be Human*, *Hot Air Salesman*, and *Betty Boop's Rise to Fame* are featured.

Christmas Classics (New Age Video). This compilation of three cartoons and one Howdy Doodie live-action short features Max's *Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer* cartoon. This was the last theatrical release with which Max was associated, and was produced as a tie-in with Montgomery Ward while Max was at Jam Handy Films in Detroit. It's an interesting cartoon, and this tape features a splicey but acceptable print recorded in the LP mode.

Viking Video Classics: Betty Boop Number Two (Viking Video). Viking Video generally produces PD tapes of very good quality, and for the most part this Betty Boop tape isn't an exception. Recorded in the LP mode, the tape includes *Betty Boop's Crazy Inventions*, *Betty in Blunderland*, *Betty Boop and Grampy*, *Betty Boop and Henry*, *Judge for a Day*, *Not Now*, *You're Not Built that Way*, *More Pep*, and *Is My Palm Red?* The last cartoon is the only real disappointment, as the company used a colorized print recorded in black and white! The results are pretty poor.

G. Michael Dobbs is the authorized biographer of Max Fleischer and loves to hear from animation fans. He can be reached by writing to 24 Hampden Street, Indian Orchard, MA 01151.

FLIPBOOKS

A Book Column by David Bastian

A ROUNDUP OF RECENT BOOKS

Masters of Animation

By John Halas; Salem House; \$24.95

John Halas is an anomaly in animation circles. Not only has he had the good fortune of enjoying a successful career as an animation producer through his Halas and Batchelor studio (in all forms: commercial, independent, computer, and feature-length projects), he is also the most prolific contributor to our animation library. Through some thirteen books which he has either edited or written, Halas has brought us closer to some of the medium's most gifted practitioners. His latest offering, *Masters of Animation*, was published to accompany the series of thirteen videotapes of the same name which Halas himself was requested to compile by the board-members of ASIFA-International.

The book is a record of some of the artists who were fortunate enough to have their films chosen for inclusion in the videotapes. Forty-two filmmakers representing over fourteen countries comprise the book's middle section, called "The Masters." For many of them, this is the first documentation of their work. France's Paul Grimault, Russia's Yuri Norstein, Britain's Bob Godfrey, Italy's Bruno Bozzetto, and Holland's Paul Driessen are all big names in animation, but with the exception of the festival circuit, their films are rarely screened in the U.S. And that's a shame.

In the book's introduction, Halas laments the fact that the medium of animation is used mainly for advertising and children's television, and that as an artform it still lacks serious critical appreciation, despite the fact that with the introduction of computer graphics it is clearly at the forefront of a new art

movement. And let no one cast any doubts on the fact that the animators covered in this book are indeed artists. Many have devoted their lives to filmmaking, with little help from advertising, and virtually no support from the film and TV industries. The many stills reproduced from their films in this book illustrate that they are all explorers of animation's graphic possibilities as well as experimenters with alternative subject matter, be it statements of social conscience or adaptations of a myriad of folk tales.

The last section of the book, "The Modern Age," contains what may possibly be the first historical survey of computer animation. Halas begins with the earliest experiments for the military and follows the practical applications developed at various universities and corporations to their present consumption by the advertising industry. And this is just the beginning.

Because of the lack of space, there is hardly enough room in the book to become very intimate with each filmmaker's work. For this reason it is unfortunate that Halas feels obligated to spend the first section of the book tracing the entire history of animation from the phenomenon of persistence of vision to its eventual use in the making of motion pictures. This chapter seems rushed and superficial. The Hollywood cartoon directors whom he grudgingly cites as important figures are not embraced with nearly as much deference as the book's ensuing international cast of directors. This would be a trifle if not for the discrepancies between the opening section and the second one. For example, Disney is admonished in the

first chapter for exploiting the brilliant Ub Iwerks, but Halas himself commits the same sin by allowing a three-page bio of Disney to headline his list of "Masters," without exploring Iwerks's own contributions (or those of the rest of Disney's staff, for that matter). And while we're at it, how come Chuck Jones is the sole representative of Warner Brothers?

But enough grumbling. Despite its occasional bias and reworking of already-established material, *Masters of Animation* fills in many gaps in the ever-growing history of animation.

(For more information on the *Masters of Animation* video series, write to the Educational Film Centre Ltd., 4-7 Kean Street, London WC2B 4AT.)

British Animated Films, 1895-1985

By Denis Gifford; McFarland & Co.; \$35.00

Denis Gifford's latest book is a catalogue of every animated film of any length to be produced in Britain for the cinema in the last ninety years. The Brits have given us much in the way of animation: the early trickfilms of Arthur Cooper and Walter R. Booth; George Studdy's Bonzo series; the Halas & Batchelor films; the Grasshopper Group; George Dunning; and Bob Godfrey, not to mention *Roger Rabbit's* Richard Williams. The work of all these artists, and many others, is represented here. In fact, to the best of Gifford's knowledge, there are 1824 known British animated shorts and features. Each title is accompanied by its production company, distributor, list of credits, and a short review.

1824 films is a lot of films. And so

there is little room in the book to ponder anything further. The eight-page introduction does discuss briefly the origins of animation in Britain, but all it really does is whet our appetites and make us ask when someone is really going to write a history of British animation. The research is all finished and compiled herein. All that's left to do is write the book.

Experimental Animation: Origins of a New Art

By Robert Russett and Cecile Starr; Da Capo Press; \$14.95

The Fleischer Story

By Leslie Carbagia; Da Capo Press; \$16.95

Da Capo Press has given a new lease on life to two more books on animation (having already revitalized Joe Adamson's *Tex Avery: King of Cartoons*.) Russett and Starr's *Experimental Animation*, out of print for more than ten years, is still as timely as ever. An excellent primer on pioneers like Norman McLaren, Lotte Reiniger, Robert Breer, John Whitney, and over thirty others, much of its information is in the form of written interviews, allowing each artist to virtually write his own chapter (a method John Halas would have done well to employ in *Masters of Animation*.)

In this revised edition, everything remains intact with one exception, one that I have mixed feelings about. The opening section on the "Rising Generation of Independent Animators" which originally included extensive and revealing notes, essays, and interviews by (among others) Caroline Leaf, Frank Mouris, and Eliot Noyes, Jr., has been replaced by a more comprehensive chapter with room to include only snippets on these animators, as well as on Jules Engel, Faith Hubley, John Canemaker, George Griffin, and others. In either of its two incarnations, this book is one of the top five books on animation ever.

Da Capo's second offering is possibly in the top ten. Leslie Carbagia's *The Fleischer Story* (1976) has been all but rewritten for this new edition, with newly-uncovered facts added to the already-existing wealth of information on the studio that gave us Betty Boop and Popeye. The book has been totally redesigned from scratch; the photos look sharper, and the layout is much more professional than the "underground comics" look of the previous edition.

Carbagia's aim this time around was to portray Max as less of a tyrant than his brothers made him out to be. And rest assured that all arguments are represented in the book...all, that is, except the infamous G. Michael Dobbs/Shamus Culhane debates!

Encyclopedia of Walt Disney's Animated Characters

By John Grant; Harper & Row; \$35.00

Walt Disney's creative legacy has been approached from every possible angle: film by film, year by year, and animator by animator. So it's not surprising that someone has set out to analyze his work character by character. The intent was valid enough: compile a sourcebook of every Disney character ever to appear in an animated short or feature, complete with as thorough a biography of each one as possible. A book that could serve as a fact file for trivia buffs trying to research Mickey Mouse's birthday date, as well as a resource for studio employees striving for consistency when handling a character. Lofty goals, to be sure.

And certain characters - Mickey, Donald, Goofy, for instance - have appeared in enough films to have a history of personality development worth chronicling. Many secondary characters, as well, were employed regularly enough to be considered legitimate Disney characters and deserving of their own entries in this book. Pluto's adversary Butch is a good example of this.

But is Ajax the gorilla, whose sole appearance was in *Donald Duck and the Gorilla*, worthy of any discussion? What about someone as obscure as Bianca the goldfish from *Mickey's Parrot*? Or worse, the tornado from *The Little Whirlwind*? Let's face it, not every bird or chipmunk who ever skipped across the screen can truly be called a character.

When characters such as Donald's nephews do provide ample information with which to crossreference, author John Grant becomes overly obsessive in his research - "If Scrooge McDuck is Huey, Dewey, and Louie's uncle, is he then Donald's brother in law?" - and is easily irked by contradictions (is it "Louie" or "Luey"?) that were no doubt oversights on the part of the animators who were employing elastic characters to play a variety of parts. (Has *Who Framed Roger Rabbit* taught us nothing?) And is it all that important to

debate whether the mouse actor who played Tiny Tim in *Mickey's Christmas Carol* was Mickey's nephew Morty or Ferdie?

Too often, as in the entry on M.C. Bird from the short *It's Tough to be a Bird*, Grant becomes bogged down in retelling the entire film's plot, and makes no comment on the character's personality (in this case, M.C.'s obviously-Jewish ancestry). In the section on the Winnie the Pooh films, Grant misses the opportunity to contrast Disney's Pooh with author A.A. Milne's character. Many Disney characters seem to be "relatives" of each other, but no mention is made, for instance, of the obvious similarity between the auctioneer in *The Small One* and *Pinocchio*'s Stromboli.

The author fares better in the book's section on the feature films, in which a character's personality grows and develops throughout the course of a single performance. One of the best psychological workups is on Basil from *The Great Mouse Detective*.

But the individual animators who were responsible for the success of a character's believability go largely unsung. Likewise, the storymen who chose to adapt the characters in particular ways from the original sources (often unfaithfully) are not consulted or even mentioned.

Perhaps the best example of the book's failing is in the section on *The Three Little Pigs*. Many great names in animation (not least among them Chuck Jones) point to that film as the earliest successful attempt at fleshing out the individual personalities of animated characters. Grant, however, only explores the making of the film, its cost, and eventual earnings.

To be fair, there is much new information here on many of Disney's animated films. Many of the color stills have never been published before. Julius the Cat, Oswald the Rabbit, and other early characters have never been so seriously dealt with before. Also, this is the only Disney book that covers *The Black Cauldron* and *Basil*. But the book's title implies much more analysis of the individual characters, an implication that turns out to be no more than that.

[Editor's note: see this issue's Short Subjects for a more favorable look at this book.]

HARLEQUIN

A TRIVIA COLUMN BY JIM KORKIS

Doesn't Anyone Want to Claim Credit for Elmer Fudd?

Searching through old newspaper and magazine clippings can drive an animation historian crazy. For example, while looking at articles from 1971, I discovered the following information. In *Funnyworld* 12, Bob Clampett tells how he created Bugs Bunny. But in *Take One* Vol. 2 No 9, Tex Avery tells how he created Bugs. But in the December 19th edition of the *TV Times* (from the *Los Angeles Times*), Chuck Jones says he created Bugs. But in that same year there was an ad for a cartooning course, and the originator of the course, Bugs Hardaway, was identified as the creator of Bugs Bunny. But in Cecil Smith's television column, again in the *Times*, Friz Freleng was identified as the creator of Bugs Bunny (and of Sylvester, Tweety, Porky Pig, and the Road Runner!).

If you think all this was pretty silly, take a look today at all the individuals who are claiming to be the one who really shaped Roger Rabbit's personality. So far, Robert Zemeckis, Richard Williams, Gary Wolf, Charles Fleischer, and others have claimed to be Roger's spiritual father. Animation history repeats itself. (By the way, in Mel Blanc's new autobiography, he claims to have come up with Bugs Bunny's name and personality.)

A Wolf in Rabbit's Clothing

Author Gary Wolf, who wrote *Who Censored Roger Rabbit?* back in 1981, was asked by the *Boston Herald* about his reaction to the movie. Wolf replied, "People are now meeting in all manner of places, in small rooms based on something I did to amuse myself over my kitchen table. Roger is really a character for the 80s. He's got more angst than some of the older cartoon characters, and he goes through all kinds of emotions. You wouldn't see Mickey Mouse do that." Wolf, 37, was a Massa-

chusetts advertising copywriter when he wrote the book. Now he's working on two screenplays (one for Disney), and he got a short blurb in the "Fast Forward" section of the September *Playboy*.



The Death of Bambi's Mother

With the rerelease of *Bambi*, it once more becomes apparent that one of the most emotion-ridden scenes in animation history is the offstage killing of Bambi's mother by a hunter's bullet. However, that wasn't the way the scene was originally planned. Fans like to talk about the "lost" scenes in *Snow White* and *Pinocchio*, but apparently *Bambi* had one, too. Selby Kelly, the widow of Pogo's Walt Kelly, was working at the Disney studio at the time the movie was being made. Mrs. Kelly confirms that the shot of Bambi's mother being hit by a hunter's bullet was actually animated, painted, and filmed. Mrs. Kelly says she painted that scene, so she should know.

Kelly Animation

Thanks to the research work of animator Nancy Beiman, who checked production charts in Disney's New York office, fans can now know that Walt Disney did the scenes of Geppetto being

washed about on the shipdeck in *Pinocchio*. Kelly also did the scenes of Geppetto catching tuna and shouting at the cat, Figaro, and of Geppetto's beer stein-clinking pocket watch. Thanks for sharing the information with us, Nancy.

Colorized Popeyes

Many fans were upset when they found out that Ted Turner had purchased the old black-and-white Popeye cartoons and intended to colorize them like many of the feature films that he owns. Fans were worried about computer-colored cartoons. It seems that they didn't worry enough. Computer colorization costs about \$10,000 a minute, so Turner looked for cheaper methods. He gave the batch of cartoons to Fred Ladd, who claims that he can do cartoon colorization in his Tokyo studio for about \$1500 per minute of film. Ladd uses the same method he used to colorize those Looney Tunes and Betty Boop cartoons back in the 1960s: cheap, unskilled labor.

You Tell 'em, Steve

In a 1984 interview with the *Los Angeles Times*, Steven Spielberg stated the following about Walt Disney's feature-length animated films: "There were scenes of utter violence and sheer terror in those films. They terrorized me as a child and I'll never forget them. For a child, fantasy is more real in a film like *Bambi*, about the loss of a parent, than in *Kramer vs. Kramer*... I also feel an obligation to work at Disney at some point as a sort of repayment for all the stuff Disney put in my imagination when I was growing up."

Do You Remember This?

When Filimation did *The New Adventures of Superman* Saturday morning show back in 1966, they actually hired writers from DC comics like Arnold Drake, Bob Haney, George Kashdan, Leo Dorfman, Bill Finger, and

Kashdan, Leo Dorfman, Bill Finger, and William Woolfolk. The use of people from DC probably accounts for the fact that so many comic book stories were adapted for the cartoons. For instance, the cartoon "Superboy - the Super Clown of Smallville" is an adaptation of the story "The Super Clown of Metropolis" from *Superman* #136 (April 1960).

Interestingly, in the Superman cartoons there was a copyboy at the *Daily Planet* named Beany. No, it wasn't a homage to Bob Clampett. Beany appeared in the old Superman radio series, and may have appeared in some of the comic books as well.

Quote From the Past

"When you say the word 'cartoon,' people think of children only, and we limit ourselves - although plenty of adults watch cartoons. We think combining the live action with the animation will give our company a special identification." So said Joe Barbera in a 1967 interview. How many fans remember the live action/animated series from Hanna-Barbera entitled *The New Advent-*

ures of Huck Finn (1968)?

Another Quote From the Past

In 1975, animator Richard Williams talked about his Oscar-winning short, *A Christmas Carol*. "We worked from the original Dickens illustrations...we went to the British Museum and Xeroxed everything down to Scrooge's socks. Unfortunately, we goofed with the nephew. What are you going to do with a normal, good-looking fellow? We tried bushy eyebrows - everything - and he still ended up looking like a stuffed shirt. You know, a critic in L.A. said he didn't like *Christmas Carol* and he was right. It's too realistic. You can do it in live action and that's why it doesn't suit animation."

Warner Wackiness

"Oh, they were nuts!" said Mel Blanc in a 1975 interview describing the working conditions at the Warner Brothers cartoon studio. "I used to just do my voices and then get the hell out. I'd walk into their office and there they'd be, one guy bent over another, both of them wearing German helmets and ano-

ther ready to bash one of them over the head with an ax! They had to act out the cartoons as they drew them."

Never Work With Animals and Children

In the July 1938 issue of *Modern Movies*, actor Alfred Lunt, one of the outstanding stage performers of all time, was asked why he rejected an offer to appear in motion pictures. Lunt's reply: "Sorry! I wouldn't mind competing with Gary Cooper or Charles Boyer, but I'll be damned if I can quack a better monologue than Donald Duck or pantomime a neater turn than Dopey the Dwarf. No thanks. I'll stay on the stage where I still have only humans to outact!"

Violence on Saturday Morning

A 1977 study showed that children's television programming on Saturday morning averaged an act of violence every two minutes. The worst offender? *The Pink Panther Show*.

Jim Korkis is co-editor, with John Cawley, of the new animation magazine *Cartoon Quarterly*.

BAKSHI INTERVIEW

(Continued from page 12)

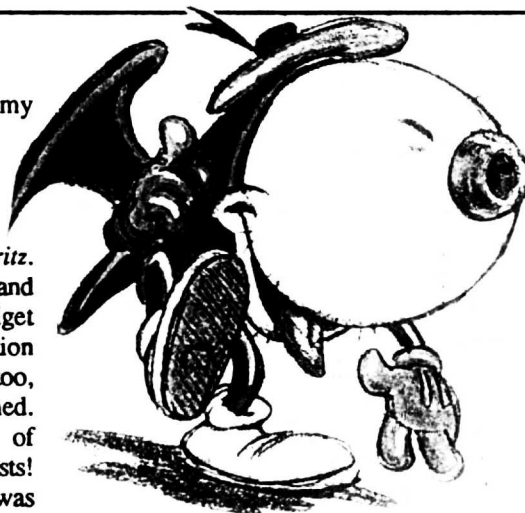
painful to me of what it meant to my company. I can't look at the film.

What films are you most proud of?

Coonskin, *Heavy Traffic* and *Fritz*. Those films broke form and tradition and were impossible to make on the budget but yet I made them. My animation level was getting better each time, too, 'cause the guys were getting trained. *Coonskin* has a very good level of animation. But still no pencil tests! [laughter] What I had on *Coonskin* was a hell of a lot of the old Warner Brothers guys and MGM guys - great guys who just couldn't believe they were being allowed to do stuff they always wanted to do and deal with ideas. It's the same feeling we've had with *Mighty Mouse*. I just watch these guys take off, finally with joy in their eyes, working seven days a week, and it made me feel very good.

What's your impression of *Wizards*? It seems to be gathering quite a cult following these days.

Again, I'm not begging off, but I had so little money to make these, all I see are



the flaws. I can't stand to look at my old movies. I don't look at my movies after I finish them because I see how terrible some of the animation was and I know I'd never make another film if I looked at them. The only way I protect myself is to keep the initial memory going in my mind of what I was after. *Wizards* was certainly based on my love of sword and sorcery, and I grew up on comics and comic books.

I saw *Wizards* at a science fiction convention last Summer and it went over great.

It's interesting that *Wizards* and *Fritz* and *Heavy Traffic* and *Coonskin* just don't stop playing, but no one discusses them. I guess this is the era of Warner Brothers, Chuck Jones, Bob Clampett and all those...

I would love to make a sequel to *Wizards* as it was made with continuing characters, and I might if I get the money, but I won't make another feature unless I finally get the bread to do it. *Roger Rabbit* might help me to do that, actually.

That's what's so encouraging about *Roger Rabbit*. It says to people, "Look, adults can watch cartoons, too." Maybe some of the financiers will look at it and decide to fund more.

No question about it. That's already happening to me. I think the reason I closed *Tattertown* is because of *Roger Rabbit*. *Roger Rabbit* is the second most important film in my life other than *Fritz*, let me tell you. [laughter] I think the animation industry is going to benefit tremendously from the *Rabbit*.

But you know, live action dies in comparison to animated figures. Isn't that great? I mean, this is what we could all be! This is how great it could all be.

SHORT SUBJECTS

REVIEWS OF RECENT FILMS AND BOOKS

Encyclopedia of Walt Disney's Animated Characters

By John Grant; Harper and Row; \$34.95

This is a generously-illustrated reference book for Disney enthusiasts that will please everybody from casual fans to hardcore trivia buffs. This nicely-printed volume contains descriptions of just about every Disney character you can think of, even the one-shot supporting characters that appeared in the shorts.

Divided into two sections, the first half of the book deals with all the characters from the short subjects, beginning with Newman Laugh-O-Grams and continuing in chronological order. The second half covers all the Disney feature film stars and supporting characters, again in chronological order. The feature-film section gives a complete plot summary, vital statistics (date of release, complete production credits, etc.), and behind-the-scenes stories about each movie. The author also throws in some of his own opinions and comments, as well as quoting from reviews that accompanied the original release of the films.

There are illustrations for practically every character mentioned, most of them in color. The quality of the printing and illustrations are top-notch; on a par, I would say, with Japanese books. (This book was printed and bound in Spain.)

The *Disney Encyclopedia* is a great reference book for plot descriptions of the many film shorts. Though it does not give a summary of every one ever made, it covers many of the most memorable ones, especially those which introduced new characters. The continuing characters (Mickey, Donald, Goofy, etc.) all have a generous portion of the book devoted to them, along with a complete filmography of every

character going all the way up to 1983's *Mickey's Christmas Carol*.

There are plot descriptions for the cartoons that each "guest star" and one-shot character appeared in, although this is somewhat of a letdown because the author frequently devotes most of the entry to a description of the particular cartoon a character appeared in, without really explaining anything about the character itself.

Each character is listed by name, and if you don't happen to know the name of the character you want to look up, you can look up the film title in the filmography index. If you don't know the film title either, you can look in the general index for the character type. For example, if you wish to find out about Pluto's dachshund girlfriend, you can look under "dogs" and you will find cross-references that will eventually lead you to the name "Dinah."

A really special feature of this encyclopedia is that it reveals the names of characters that were never assigned names on-screen. For example, the miniature wolf who appears in *Primitive Pluto* is "Primo"; the stork in *Cold Storage* is "Fred Stork"; the cat in *Puss Cafe* and *Cold Turkey* is "Milton."

Where did the author get these names if they were never mentioned in the films? He states in the introduction that he had free access to the original animators' notes and model sheets. (The studio usually gives a character a name for reference, even if it has no "official" name.)

Another handy feature is cross-reference marks for characters that appear in more than one film. If you come across an entry for a Mickey film which mentions Pegleg Pete, for example, the character name is followed by a page number in bold type to refer you to the entry for

that particular character. Incidentally, Pete holds the record as the longest-running Disney character. He first appeared in the early Alice comedies, and continued right through the Mickey-Donald era. His most recent theatrical appearance was in *Mickey's Christmas Carol*, and he still turns up on episodes of Disney's *DuckTales* under various names.

All in all, I would say that the *Disney Encyclopedia* is the best reference book yet on the studio's animation output. Of course, it would be nicer if they came out with a guide to every short film it ever produced, including a plot description and production credits (a la Jerry Beck and Will Friedwald's *Warner Bros. Cartoons* book). But this volume comes pretty close.

The author, John Grant, lives in England and has to his credit assorted magazine writings (fiction and non-fiction), short stories, a geology encyclopedia (?), and has entries in other encyclopedias, in addition to being a Disney fan. While I am sure he put just as much care and research into this project as into his geology encyclopedia, I did manage to catch a couple of slight errors. The aforementioned Milton the Cat also appeared in *Plutopia*, although this is not mentioned. Also, under the entry for the compilation film *The Coyote's Lament*, he lists "Bent-Tail," "Grandpappy Coyote," and "Pappy Coyote" as separate characters, although "Grandpappy" actually is Bent-Tail several years older, and "Pappy" is "Junior" grown up.

I don't want to nitpick, though. This book was produced with the full cooperation of the Disney Archives, and I highly recommend it to all Disney fans and collectors.

Matthew Hasson

Outrageous Animation

Released by Expanded Entertainment

Before I got to the Coolidge Corner Moviehouse, I thought about it. I figured that the Metal Warriors and Head Bangers of the future would sit around a bombed out apartment on the Haunted Mesa and would throw the video of *Outrageous Animation* up on some giant or micro-mini TV screen. This would be heavy and heady stuff. Whatever they'd be making beer cans out of would be getting crushed against each others' heads as they'd drink and belch and guffaw at whatever grossness awaited them in *OutragAn*.

I'd just finished reading *No One Gets Out Alive* and I was asking why? Why did Jim Morrison push his performance to the limits of public acceptance in Miami in 1969 when he made like he was exposing himself? His personal demon needed to do that. He needed to be outrageous. I know artists who need to express themselves in that howl that can cause shudders to run down the spines of their listeners, or readers, or viewers.

Why does a dog lick himself? Because he can. I thought about that line because I saw the first few words of Charles Taylor's review of *OutragAn* as I cut it out of the *Boston Phoenix*. I was trying not to read anybody else's comments on the show, but I hadn't missed that. I knew I was going to see a cartoon dog lick himself, and vomit and watch pigeons eat it up.

I was getting tuned for the toons. It was hot for the one o'clock Sunday show. I thought about the midnight WBCN event a couple of nights before. That must have been the night of the Head Bangers of the Haunted Mesa. But I hadn't made it. I was thinking about Outrageousness on a hot sunny Sunday afternoon so bright even vampires would leave shadows.

I checked out the scene. It had become a scene now. *Outrageous Animation* had begun right out here in the street. This was the scene and the people on the street and in line were characters just like me and Roger Rabbit.

I spent some time talking to the two men named Harry who were taking tickets. Two little old ladies were quite early for the upstairs movie, and they were grumbling about the stairs. Harry was delightful, assuring them that they had plenty of time to make it to the top before the movie started. They weren't here for animation, but some other old folks were. I asked for quick reviews of

OutragAn. Harry said, "Those eastern Europeans are really into fecal matter." I had heard that before, in preview to *OutragAn*, but not spoken so eloquently.

I was ready. Let the wild rumpus start.

I found a variety of visual styles. A number of techniques. Production values high and minimal. Some cheap stuff and some rich. I had a pleasant feeling, reminding me of festivals at Ottawa and Hiroshima that I had attended. Was it outrageous? Nah. Uh uh. Nope.

Forget all that Outrageous stuff. The cartoons were collected together because they were sometimes a little strange and weird, and animation is often that. There were moments of bad taste, but full frontal nudity (live action) even got



From Jack Mac and Rad Boy...Go

restored to the animations of Monty Python now on MTV. PBS had not allowed it.

Yes, I remember Bruno Bozetto's *Strip Tease*. The stripper was sexy and very attractive, and a la Roger Rabbit and Tony the Tiger. It was fun to see the lady swat the cartoon man crawling up her naked thigh and then crush him underfoot with her high heel shoe.

I remember quirky little cartoon bathrooms that didn't quite make sense, and at one moment in *The Erection* I think I was struck with the levels of consciousness and shifting location that I saw as each voyeur became the subject for another voyeur all down the line until the all-seeing eye of God peeked in, filled up the universe with water, and sent in the ark. Holy Noah! There should be more moments like that.

Film is an anticipatory medium. Sometimes more and sometimes less. During *An Inside Job*, the screen is filled with a nearly-still graphic of a

man's open mouth. He's the patient of a dentist who has just been called away. A strange other dentist shows up (I think he sells Isuzus, too). What do I think will happen? I imagine the worst.

I figure the dentist will surprise the the open-mouthed dentist with something sexual. I was wrong. Was I bad too?

Then there was novocaining and drilling. I imagined a web of thread being sewn through the holes. Wrong again. The holes were being filled. This was fascinating. There was very little happening on the screen, except for a wonderful story being told by the psycho dentist about Orson Welles and Jack Nicholson and Humphrey Bogart all in a movie. I'm listening to it, and there's all this anticipating going on in my mind. Now this is very rich for a cartoon show.

I guess Outrageous is sex and violence and naughty bits and bad words and some toilet things. Sigourney Weaver got an Academy Award nomination for *Aliens*, and she talked dirtier than all the toons here put together. I already mentioned Terry Gilliam's Python work, and *OutragAn* plays it all for laughs.

I guess all the shorts are played for laughs. In *Rondino*, a little line-drawn character is tortured by hooded creatures who look just like him when they doff their hoods, and this struck a rather serious note. Political prisoners and Amnesty International, et al. But most of these films shoot for oneliners and sight gags.

What is really Outrageous? Nothing in *OutragAn* comes close to the masterful Japanese animated film *Golgol-13*. I have never seen a rape in live-action American film presented as graphically and savagely as in that film. Rape, murder, slow-motion death, blood and guts, and some tasty erotic sex all show up in this Japanese adult animated feature film.

I loved the punks in *OutragAn's Jack Mac and Rad Boy...Go*, because they were Big Daddy Rothish, crazily drawn with nice use of line and color. The voices were terrible to my ear, but the look of the short, and the quasi-punk sensibility struck a chord in my nasty soul.

Late Night With Myron has a little boy with a remote control watching 3D TV. Great character stuff with a great look. It has a rough Leica reel effect, with tracing-paper drawings and marks of sketching abounding. Nice graphic feel.

Bill Plympton's *One of Those Days* is too rough-looking for my taste. Great gags and ideas all seen through subjective point-of-view, but it is all executed in scribbly crayon on paper with numerous time-killing cycles.

Expanded Entertainment is getting animation out and in front of the eyes of many people, and that is a very good thing in itself. But packaging and promotion are things of selling. Their advertising copy for *Ouragan* pumps me up with "We've combed the planet to find...truly wild and crazy cartoons and...goodies...scandalous...shocking...hilarious...unbelievable..." And they've got a poster picture of Lupo the Butcher that isn't actually a scene from that film. If they set people's expectations up with this, then some people will be disappointed. But we all know that you can't tell a book by its cover.

When I left the show, I walked across the street to the Paperback Booksmith and prowled around the racks until I found Norman Spinrad's *Little Heroes*. I caught myself thinking about something other than my article on *Ouragan*. My mind had wandered a little during the show. It always will during twenty-three short films.

Wanna watch a cat eat a plate of spaghetti only to find that he's just eaten a plate of worms that come crawling back out of his face? Yeah, that's kinda Outrageous. But the audience never screamed with delight during *Ouragan* the way I've seen them do during the Baby Herman short that starts up *Who Framed Roger Rabbit?* That's truly Outrageous!

Bob White

That's Not All Folks!

By Mel Blanc and Phillip Bashe; Warner Books; \$17.95

As the tens of thousands of fans who must have attended them over the years know, Mel Blanc's lectures are something special. The greatest voice artist in animation history tells anecdotes about his long career, speaks in a few of his hundreds of voices, and shows some Oscar-winning Warner Bros. cartoons.

Blanc's autobiography has a lot in common with his personal appearances. The stories about the creation of Bugs Bunny, about Jack Benny, and about his nearly-fatal automobile accident are here, sometimes in almost the same words he uses in his lectures. Although the printed page can't convey the magic of actually seeing and hearing Blanc speak



Mel Blanc and Robert McKimson at a recording session in the 1940s.
From *That's Not All Folks!*

as Bugs Bunny or Daffy Duck, he does write of how he developed these characters' voices and why they sound like they do.

There is much of interest here, but this not-very-long book suffers from heavy and rather obvious padding. Interspersed with the nuggets of information are numerous cartoon plot descriptions and elementary information about the history of animation and radio comedy that don't have much to do with Blanc's place in those two media. One imagines that Blanc's co-author was responsible for these pages; it certainly seems unlikely that Blanc sat down and wrote up, for instance, a brief synopsis of Walt Disney's early career, complete with film titles and dates. Much more interesting is the material that relates more directly to Mel Blanc, especially the sections on his early days as a struggling radio performer and on his accident and its aftermath.

Another thing that *That's Not All Folks!* shares with Blanc's personal appearances, regrettably, is a sometimes-questionable factual accuracy. When Blanc says that he ad-libbed Bugs Bunny's "What's Up Doc?," he may be stating what happened as he remembers it. But readers of Joe Adamson's *Tex*

Avery: *King of Cartoons* will recall that Avery, too, took claim for the famous catchphrase. In smaller matters, Blanc is certifiably wrong fairly often: he perpetuates an anecdote about the creation of Woody Woodpecker that could not have occurred, and pegs his leaving of the role of Woody some years after it actually happened. Things like the consistent misspelling of *Pinocchio* and Leon Schlesinger's name are minor but irritating errors that should have been caught.

The reader only superficially familiar with Blanc's career and the history of animation will undoubtedly enjoy this book; the serious animation fan will probably be disappointed by how little introspection into Blanc's art and life, and how little new information on Warner Bros. history, the book offers. In one fascinating paragraph, Blanc reveals that he found Bob Clampett a frustratingly indecisive director, and Robert McKimson an easy-to-work-with one who knew exactly what he wanted. It's too bad that *That's Not All Folks!* doesn't contain more interesting opinions of that sort; Blanc has surely developed them after five decades in the animation business.

Harry McCracken



Hello, drearies, I'm back by popular request! Lots of gossip has piled up since we last met!

Hey, here's an interesting bit: Notice how the license on the car in "Family Dog" (shown on *Amazing Stories*) is the same as the apartment number in *The Brave Little Toaster*? (A113). Is this meaningful? Is this Brad Bird's apartment number? Who cares?

Let's all extend our best wishes to Woody Woodpecker, currently in the hospital with a sprained beak. It seems that Andy Panda recently had his house brickfaced and forgot to tell his ol' pal. (And Woody, call your buddy Thelma if you want a list of cartoon stars with tempting, tasty wood homes.)

It was interesting to see so many cartoon characters make endorsements during the presidential race this year, drearies. In case you missed any of the press conferences, speeches, or photo opportunities, here's a brief rundown of who got whose blessings. Military men *Commander McBragg* and *Private Snafu* naturally gravitated towards Gen. Alexander M. Haig, Jr. Senator Albert Gore, Jr. (D-Tenn.) received endorsements from *Deputy Dawg* and *Foghorn Leghorn*. *Bosko* and *Fat Albert* made public their support for the Rev. Jesse L. Jackson. *Farmer Alfalfa* announced that he found Rep. Richard Gephardt (D-NY)'s stand on the farm crisis mighty appealing. Gary Hart picked up the support of two members of the Hollywood cartoon colony - *Pepe LePew* and the *Tex Avery Wolf*. And former Arizona governor Bruce Babbitt received the endorsement of *Castello*, his former co-star from his Warner

Bros. cartoon days, as well as noted sportsman *Elmer Fudd*. (Though insiders have suggested that Fudd thought Babbitt's name to be Bruce *Wabbit*.)

In the general election, Vice President George Bush has picked up the support of *Yosemite Sam* (on the strength of his opposition to gun control), *C-3PO* and *R2-D2* (who like his support of the "Star Wars" program), and *Popeye* (who's all in favor of Bush's call for a stronger navy). Also endorsing the Republican ticket and particularly outspoken in their support of Vice-Presidential nominee Dan Quayle are *Quentin Quail* (the two are brothers), and *Daffy Duck* (the star of *Draftee Daffy* called Quayle "a thuperb candidate and a true patriot").

The Democratic nominee, Massachusetts Governor Michael S. Dukakis, has obtained endorsements from *Droopy* (who said that Dukakis adds "excitement" to the race), *Bambi* (like the governor a supporter of strict gun control), and *Doc* (who likes Dukakis's views on national health insurance). Another vocal Dukakis backer is *Pegleg Pete*, presently on furlough from a Massachusetts prison.

Guess who's currently penning a kiss-and-tell autobiography? Thelma will never tell, but let's just say that a certain cartoon-star magpie (let's call him "J") may be awfully put out with his partner in a few months.

Onto more news I bet you haven't heard yet. The enormous popularity of the Disney and Muppet Babies, Flintstone and Archies kids, and Popeye as a father, has sent a clear message to animation producers that we cartoon fans enjoy watching our favorite cartoon

characters at every point in their lifespan. As part of their never-ending quest to satisfy the demands of cartoon viewers, the studios have launched a number of new projects which will introduce us to classic cartoon characters at every possible point in their lives. Here are a few of the new specials, series, and films in preproduction: *The Disney Geezers*: Now we can watch wizened versions of the whole Disney gang cope in their always amusing manner with blueberry stains, Social Security, and osteoporosis. *Mr. Sweepee, CPA*: Popeye's "adopted infink" returns to TV as a middle aged family man who operates an accountant's office out of the law firm of Peepeye, Pupeye, Pipeye, and Poopeye, Attorneys at Law. *Pinocchio at 16*:

This series will show that Pinoke didn't learn his lesson at the close of the Disney feature, as the troubled youth travels the route from petty crime to armed robbery to things too unspeakable to mention. *General Snafu*: This series will chronicle Snafu's hilarious misadventures as Chief of the Armed Forces during the Vietnam War. *Big Audrey*: As Little Audrey, she told tall tales, avoided schoolwork, and nodded off to sleep (and fantastic dreams) in the darndest places; as Big Audrey, we now see her as an illiterate, narcoleptic liar who can't hold down a job or keep a relationship. And let's not forget *Fudd*: *Secretary of the Interior*, *He Old Man*, and *Adult Huey*.

Well, that's all for this issue. Until next time, sweeties, keep those cards and letters coming and TURN OUT THAT LIGHT!

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